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THE VISION OF PROPHECY

FROM A BOOK FUND COMMEMORATING
RUTH GERALDINE ASHEN
CLASS OF 1931

It's a sad thing
when a man is to be so soon forgotten
And the shining in his soul
gone from the earth
With no thing remaining;

And it's a sad thing
when a man shall die
And forget love
which is the shiningness of life;

But it's a sadder thing
that a man shall forget love
And he not dead but walking in the field
of a May morning
And listening to the voice of the thrush.

—R.G.A., in *A Yearbook of Stanford Writing*, 1931

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THE

VISION OF PROPHECY

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

JAMES D. BURNS, M.A.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
JAMES NISBET AND CO., 21 BERNERS STREET, W.
1865.

No laurel leaves, no sweet unfading flowers,
Bloom in the garland of these simple lines;
They are but rushes woven in random hours,
Like those some lonely shepherd-boy entwines:

The while his fingers plait the scentless wreath,
He finds some pleasure in his idle skill;
At even, he leaves it withering on the heath,
Or strews its fragments on the moorland rill.

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THE VISION OF PROPHECY.

ARGUMENT.

The destinies of the world controlled by the Spirit of God, and announced by Him to man directly, or through the Hebrew Prophets (I.)—First announcement of a Redeemer coeval with the Fall (II.)—Clearer revelations made in after-times to the same effect: this the crowning theme, or "spirit of prophecy" (III.-V.)—The fortunes of the Jewish people particularly foretold and verified (VI.-VIII.)—Those also of the descendants of Ishmael (IX.)—Prophecy fulfilled in the overthrow and degradation of ancient empires and cities: Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt (X.-XII.)—In the succession of the four empires of the Old World (XIII.)—In the rise of the Antichristian power (XIV.)—Its calls to guilty nations, and threatenings of retribution (XV., XVI.)—The final triumph of a kingdom of righteousness and peace (XVII.)

I.

O'ER earth's tumultuous changes
A Spirit rules, and moves the springs of Time;
High vaulted o'er the stars' aërial ranges
A temple towers, and from that height sublime
A voice oracular hath sounded clear;
Of old the wondering nations heard,

In hymns of hope, or chants of fear,
Heaven's challenge to the world's regard
Re-echoed from the Hebrew lyre,—
Majestic tones of seer and priest
Whose lips had trembled with baptismal fire.
That ancient music rings from age to age,
Its sacred virtue hath not ceased:
The prophets are not; but the Holy Page
Is through all time the mystic truth revealing,—
The Word is to the World appealing.

II.

Thou, Everlasting Spirit!
Who on the weltering deep didst move, and call
From emptiness this world which we inherit,
Hast watched its course, to order shaping all
The strange confusion of its winding way.
Thou didst forecast its horoscope,
And, in its earliest woes, allay
Its terror with a whispered hope.
When man unlinked the golden chain
By which the earth hung nearer Heaven,
And over Eden saw the glory wane,
Thy voice was heard from out the darkened skies:
A promise to the exile given,
A sudden glimpse of shadowy destinies;—

And Thou didst haste the glimmering hope to waken,
That he was not cast forth forsaken.

III.

Far down the thronging ages
The vision of a better time appears;
It slowly brightens out of dim presages,
And strikes a radiance through the mist of years.
With gladness then the faithful patriarchs saw
A heavenly Presence walk the earth;
In Syrian tents they watched with awe
The unfolding mystery of His birth.
Then Zion's consecrated height
Became an oracle; and there,
In smoking sacrifice, and gorgeous rite,
The great Redemption and its vast design
Were mirrored to the worshipper.
The fire of every altar in the shrine
Lit up His cross, and Sin's dark burden fell,
Through Him, from sorrowing Israel.

IV.

How clear the strains which sounded
From ravishing harps, touched with no earthly skill!
Though then the compass of their notes was bounded,
The unutterable burden lingers still.

Sweet from the holy mountain, temple-crowned,
The Levite's hymn stole up the sky;
While murmurs of melodious sound,
From cymbal, pipe, and psaltery,
With burst of chanting voices, rung
Through pillared court and porch at even,—
Exulting chorals, such as David sung,
And psalms prophetic of a sinless reign;
Or measures with the cadence given
To rapt Isaiah's rich sonorous strain.
Hark! how the jubilant song swells ever clearer
As earth beholds its Saviour nearer.

v.

He was thy theme of glory,
O Prophecy! He fixed thine eye from far:
His was the name that faltered through thy story,—
His was thy Sceptre,—His thine Eastern Star!
With joy didst thou announce the heavenly Child
In Bethlehem born in lowly guise,
While the meek mother, undefiled,
Drooped over Him her pensive eyes;
Thou didst behold the sorrowing Man,—
Stand by Him in His watch of dread,
When angels stood apart; thine eye outran
The passage of His days, the first to see

The guiltless Sufferer bow His head,
And conquer death by dying on the tree.
Thou, the bright herald of Salvation,
Stood'st pointing to that dread Oblation.

VI.

By thy high sanctions guarded,
The father of the faithful held his hope;
Thy promise well his patient trust rewarded,
What time beneath Heaven's blue unclouded cope,
He stood alone, and in the starry skies,—
The silent, shining multitude
Of worlds,—he saw his destinies,
The countless children of his blood
That should arise, and call him blest.
Thy voice the Hebrew bondsman saved,
And cheered the weary tribes with hope of rest,
Through sultry desert-marches toiling slow,—
Over their tents thy shadow waved;
Thou didst in cloud and fire thy signal show
Before their armies, till, in Canaan's borders,
They settled in their peaceful orders.

VII.

Fair vision! but soon blighted,
When altars rose to Ashtaroth and Baal,

And then thy voice, the voice of Him they slighted,
Was heard in calm rebuke and piercing wail.
Lo! as it rose, their weakened tribes were driven
Before the foes they once had quelled;
Their lock of strength was shorn, and Heaven
The alliance of its stars withheld;
From king to king, from age to age,
A slow corroding influence spread;
And deeper grew thy voice of sad presage,
And darker hung thy thunder-freighted cloud,
Till o'er their bold defiant head
The storm of vengeance burst prolonged and loud;
Their cities fall, and forth their tribes are hurled,—
The homeless vagrants of the world.

VIII.

Far through the nations scattered,
Thy shadow tracks the wandering Hebrew still;
Each, like the fragment of a temple shattered
By levin-fire upon some lofty hill,
Carries upon his front the fated brand.
Behold him, as he walks apart,
A citizen of every land,—
A trafficker in every mart,
Yet severed in the crowd from each.
Their fatherland is his by birth,

He breathes the accents of their household-speech ;
Yet from his features never fades the seal
That stamps the orphan-race of earth.
So through a lake a separate stream may steal,
And swiftly onwards to its outlet tend,
But never with its waters blend.

IX.

Thy power in desert places,
Where, by the palm, the Arab plants his lance,
Is felt; it filled them with their straggling races,
Lords of a poor but loved inheritance:
When Sarah's weeping handmaid cast her child
Beneath the sheltering shrub to die,
A voice, announcing fortunes wild
And strange, rung through the empty sky.
Twelve princes from the outcast sprung,
And trained their tribes to ruthless war.
Untameable as eagles, they have flung
From their free necks, each victor's iron chain,
And from behind their rocky bar,
To every summons hurled their proud disdain.
Above their tents, in the brown deserts lying,
Thy voice, O Prophecy! is crying.

X.

On many a mound of ruin
Thy dark-stoled phantom sits, and ever sings
Of guilty glory, and its sure undoing.
Speak, ye who opened Nineveh's Hall of Kings!—
Ye who have passed by Nimroud's mound!
For ye have seen her: ye can tell
How on you, as ye looked around,
The mystery of her presence fell.
Long hath that shadow lingered there;
Upon that night of fear and blood,
When old Euphrates saw his channels bare,
Thou, awful Presence! didst the Persian guide,
Up the moist hollows of the flood,
And blow the threatening trumpet at his side;
A heathen prince fulfilled thy high decree,
And set the captive people free.

XI.

Where Tyre once saw the splendour
Of marble structures mirrored in her bay,
And snow-white temples in the sunshine render
More dazzling radiance to the light of day,
Thy hand is pointing to her broken piles,
Thy voice is wailing in the surge.

When Macedon's far-glittering files
Begirt her ramparts, thou didst urge
Their captain to his dread commission;
He, chosen instrument of God,
Struck higher than the mark of his ambition;—
She falls, revives, decays, till wasting years
Have blown her very dust abroad.
The unconscious fisher on her shell-grown piers
Spreads out his nets; and, from afar beholding,
Men mark thy roll of woes unfolding.

XII.

What memories round thee cluster,
O Egypt! from the vague unfeatured past:
From thy dark temples Science poured its lustre,
Art round thy brow its mystic aureole cast.
Eldest of kingdoms, and the proudest long,
Alas, how sunken art thou now!
Judgment on thee hath laid her strong,
Her iron hand, and brought thee low.
The ancient doom still works in thee,
Fore-uttered in thy day of fame,
"Basest of kingdoms, Egypt, thou shalt be!"
A race of slaves has stolen to Pharaoh's throne,—
Thou art not dead, but living shame
Is worse than death. We sadly look upon

Thy shrivelled features, and thy Pyramids hoary
Are head-stones of a grave of glory.

XIII.

While the crowned Chaldean slumbered,
Thou didst undrape to him thy fateful glass,
Prophetic Spirit! there distinctly numbered,
He saw four sceptred phantoms slowly pass.
No Daniel need come mantled from the dead
To expound the vision now to men,
In Time's fulfilling light we read
The destinies so darkened then.
Four empires in their lust of power
Oppressed the world: the mystic stone,
Hewn from the mountain, smote them in their hour
Of towering pride, and laid their glory low.
From the vast wreck a nobler throne
Emerges; fair beyond all earthly show,
A kingdom rises on its broad foundations,
Whose law of love subdues the nations.

XIV.

Priest of a faith apostate,
A mitred sovereign sits in Cæsar's chair;
He long hath worn the purple, long hath boasted
That favouring Heaven hath crowned, and kept him there;

With saintly blood his scarlet vestments shine;
He holds a sorcerer's cup, and deep
The nations of the enchanted wine
Have drunk, and sunken into sleep.
The souls beneath the altar cry
For vengeance, and the saints oppressed
On earth to the incessant call reply.
Even now impends thy doom, proud Babylon!
Thy vassal kingdoms of the West
Shall rise in wrath, and hurl thee from thy throne.
Soon shall the sceptre of thy state be shivered,—
And Conscience from thy yoke delivered.

XV.

In accents wild and mournful,
Thy voice entreats a fallen world to rise,
O Prophecy! Infatuate and scornful,
It recks not of its awful destinies;
The oppressor under thine uplifted rod
Still waves his reddening scourge of guilt,
Still murmurs in the ear of God
The cry of blood by brothers spilt;
The trampled nations writhe in woe;
With giant stride, Vice walks the earth,
And Evil spreads in darker, deadlier flow,
A deluge more appalling than of old;

And Pleasure revels loud, and Mirth
Entwines her rose-wreath; Avarice, for gold,
Leads forth her pilgrims over seas and mountains,
And Gain still thirsts for fresher fountains.

XVI.

With lurid splendour glowing,
Thy ciphers stand on the world's girdling wall,
But no Belshazzar on the sign is throwing
A fearful eye, or lets the wine cup fall;
Unheeded are the few interpreters
Who, lifting faithful voices loud,
Expound the cryptic characters,
Amid the riot of the crowd;—
But, O ye kings! in time be wise!—
Ye nations! hear the dread command,—
Awake from sensual slumber, ere the skies
Are cloven, and the strong all-shattering blast
Proclaims the reckoning at hand,
And the long day of visitation past.
Unmoved ye hear the summons to repentance,—
Unpitied must ye bide the sentence.

XVII.

Even now thy latest vision,
Thy loveliest, brightens through the mist of Time.

The day-spring breaks,—a purple light Elysian
Through the clear ether gladdens every clime,
The desert laughs with more than Eden's bloom ;
The curse is lifted from the world,
War frowns no more in the thunder-gloom,—
Its trump is still,—its banner furled.
Peace girds the white-robed family
Of nations, with her golden zone ;
And hark ! unnumbered voices, swelling high
And loud, as surges breaking on the shore,
Stream up in adoration to the throne,
Whereon the crownèd Christ sits evermore.
Time's mystery is sealed ; the Church is blest,
Creation enters into rest.

THE CAVE OF MACHPELAH.

BENEATH some stately pyramid of old
Cheops might moulder in spice-stifled gloom,
And all his heirs, in silken cerements rolled,
Embalmèd statues,—claim as vast a tomb,—
As if a king all-levelling Death could brave,
And keep aloof the rabble of the grave.

That wonder of the elder world, the pile
By faithful Artemisia sadly raised
To her loved Carian, hoping to beguile
A life-long grief, might merit to be praised:
A dome, the memory of whose ancient fame
Has given each sumptuous sepulchre a name.

But thou, Judean sepulchre and cave!
By no such hands wast hewn, nor wert thou decked
With fluted column, frieze, and architrave,
The cunning sculpture of the architect!
Yet at the thought of thee my bosom swells,
And oft beside thee mournful memory dwells.

I see where, in a ring of pastoral hills,
An Eastern city lies, and near the gates
The solemn grove that shades thee,—fancy fills
The interspace with forms which it creates;
And all thy dead, before my dreaming eyes,
In long and shadowy procession rise.

My mind recals thee on that doleful day,
When from his place, beside his Sarah's bier,
The patriarch rose, and calmed his passion's sway,—
While all the dark-robed Hittites gathered near,—
And courteously entreated for his dead
A sepulchre, and bowed his reverend head.

The children of the land with grief were touched,
And Ephron with mild dignity arose;
Quick to the generous impulse, he avouched
His wish to yield him freely what he chose.
Then in thy empty vault he sought the right
To bury his belovèd from his sight.

Strange that the first inheritance he owned
In all the breadth of Canaan was a grave,
And a few roods around; that the sole bond
Or charter God, through years of trial, gave
To him whose seed was Canaan's later heir,
Was that by which he claimed a sepulchre!

It seemed a slender and a mournful tie
To such a glorious gift; but Abram's faith
Sought not a stronger pledge; yea, could rely
Through life on the bare promise, and in death;
It drew his hopes within the sphere of sense,
And gave the unseen a present evidence.

No patriarch had a home: the grassy dells,
In which his sheep and camels browse to-day,
To-morrow are deserted, and their wells
Forsaken; the long line resumed its way
Once more, and in perpetual pilgrimage
They passed their lives from infancy to age.

This sepulchre was all their home; no force
Could seize it, no disquietude molest;
They filled its vacant vaults, till, in the course
Of their succession, each contained its guest;
And thus, in resting from life's fevered toil,
Each with his dust took seisin of the soil.

So, too, it seemed each hoary-headed sire,
When slow-paced age with its infirmities
Sounded death's soft alarum, would retire
To this lone spot; the while from his old eyes
The world was fading, calmly to prepare
For its approach, in thoughtfulness and prayer.

Under the shadow of these murmuring trees,
While vigour fails and outward sight grows dim,
Each gathers up his thoughts, and by degrees
Beholds Heaven's portals opening for him,—
Hears voices that on earth have ceased to sound,
And wings of angels rustling soft around.

O blessed close of lives outworn with toils
And wanderings! O sacred time of rest!
O hallowed hours when God himself assoils
The soul about to mingle with the blest:
Evening of preparation, calm and clear,
For the eternal Sabbath now so near:

A tranquil eve that shuts a stormy day,
When westering clouds are flushed with opal dyes,
And crimson mists steam upwards, and we say,
To-morrow's sun will bring serener skies,
And heaven completes its dome of stainless blue,
With here and there a white star sparkling through.

The Eden of their earth lay all around
Machpelah; God descended in the cool
Of even to walk with them, and all the ground
Was therefore holy,—therefore beautiful;
And their free spirits panted for the time
When they should soar to an unwithering clime.

To them it ceased to be a place of death;
It was the porch through whose subduing gloom
They passed into the temple; the sweet breath
Of heaven here soothed their hearts; the lovely bloom
Of that fair land refreshed their drooping eyes;
And glimpses came to them from other skies.

As mariners, long driven through unknown seas
By stress of tempest, if, when steering on,
Or ever land appear, the evening breeze
Blow faint with sandal-wood or cinnamon,
Look out for the blue haze of spicy isles,
And trim their sails, and no more grudge their toils;

These weary voyagers here drew to shores
Bathed in eternal sunshine, and the past
Was all forgotten as the surge that roars
Beyond the reef; in this still bay they cast
Their anchor; watched the waves glide up the sand,
And wondered at the beauty of the land.

Around this cherished sepulchre they died,
Heirs of a vault,—lords only of a grave;
And after all, is he who looks with pride
Upon his ample lands, whose forests wave
On hills unseen from his baronial door,
Heir of a larger house, and lord of more?

The lands that may descend from sire to son
Are not inalienable: Time or Chance,
Proud lord! may challenge what thou call'st thine own,
And wrest from thee the old inheritance;—
Thou art a tenant at God's will,—thy lease
May run out long before thine own decease.

But thou hast a Machpelah; this is thine,
And this alone; thou art the absolute
Possessor of a sepulchre or shrine
To lay thy bones in,—none will dare dispute
Thy right to rest there, till the knell of doom
Shall startle even the silence of the tomb.

No force shall wrest, no time shall alienate
This sure possession from thy coming heirs:
Contract thy mind into this small estate,
And give thy soul to nobler thoughts and cares;
Thus thou shalt plant a garden round the tomb,
Where golden hopes may flower, and fruits immortal
bloom.

THE BURIAL OF JACOB.

I.

It is a solemn cavalcade, and slow,
That comes from Egypt; never had the land,
Save when a Pharaoh died, such pomp of woe
Beheld; never was bier by such a band
Of princely mourners followed, and the grand
Gloom of that strange funereal armament
Saddened the wondering cities as it went.

II.

In Goshen he had died, that region fair
Which stretches east from Nilus to the wave
Of the great Gulf; and since he could not bear
To lay his ashes in an alien grave,
He charged his sons to bear them to the cave
Where slumbered all his kin, that, from life's cares
And weariness, his dust might rest with theirs.

III.

So when the best embalmers for the bier
Had drest him,—in the pungent nitre laid
The body, and with galbanum, and myrrh,
And cedar-oil, a costly unguent made,
And in a spikenard-dripping shroud arrayed
The limbs ne'er delicately clad till now,—
The Twelve assembed to fulfil their vow.

IV.

For seventy days through Egypt ran the cry
Of woe, for Joseph wept; and now there came
Along with him the rank and chivalry
Of Pharaoh's court,—the flower of Egypt's fame;
High captains, chief estates, and lords of name,
The prince, the priest, the warrior, and the sage,
Made haste to join in that sad pilgrimage.

V.

By the green borders of the reedy Nile,
Where wades the ibis, and the lotus droops,
The armèd horsemen ride in glittering file
To Goshen, swarthy chieftains with their troops
Of vassals from the Thebaid, gathering groups
Of pilgrims from the populous towns, whose vast
And massy piles loomed o'er them as they passed.

VI.

The hoary elders in their robes of state
Were there, and sceptred judges; and the sight
Of their pavilions pitched without the gate
Was pleasant; chariots with their trappings bright
Stood round,—till all were met, and every rite
Was paid;—then at a signal the array
Moved with a heavy splendour on its way.

VII.

Its very gloom was gorgeous, and the sound
Of brazen chariots, and the measured feet
Of stately-pacing steeds upon the ground,
Seemed by its dead and dull monotonous beat
A burden to that march of sorrow meet;
With music Pharaoh's minstrels would have come
Had Joseph wished,—'twas better they were dumb.

VIII.

In a long line the sable draperies waved
Far backward from the bier,—and as they go,
The people of the cities he had saved
Look from their walls, afflicted with his woe,
And watch the pageant as it winds below,—
And prayers arose for him, and tears were shed,
And blessings called from Heaven upon his head.

IX.

They pass by many a town then famed or feared,
But quite forgotten now,—and over ground
Then waste, on which in after time were reared
Cities whose names were of familiar sound
For centuries,—Bubastus, and renowned
Pelusium, whose glories in decay
Gorged the lean desert with a splendid prey.

X.

Now in their eastward march the waste expands
In front, and, faring wearily, they reach
That dread Serbonian lake amid the sands:
Oh, many are the bones which yet shall bleach
Among the rushes of that deadly beach,—
Many the warriors who shall find a grave
In the false shallows of that perilous wave!

XI.

For many a dreary league the treacherous swamp
Still lengthens on the left; the loose-blown sand
Beneath their steps, the vapours breathing damp
From the green marsh, annoy the straggling band;
But Joseph's thoughts none there may understand,—
His mind recalls the time when through this wild,
The merchants bore the unresisting child.

XII.

The way that then was watered with his tears
Is wet with them again; the tender thought
Of his fond father and his boyish years
Before his eye the hills of Canaan brought,—
He saw his childhood's tents, and many a spot
Where oft, at eve, a visionary boy,
He wandered on in innocence and joy.

XIII.

Alas! they were but dreams,—the sense returns
Of grief, and death, and vacancy; he still
Is in the desert,—the fierce sunlight burns
On the white parching sands,—the hot winds fill
The hazy tingling air with dust, until
A drowsy languor creeps through every limb,
And mocking images at distance swim.

XIV.

But when the sun set, and the fall of dew
Had cooled the air, and the clear vault of heaven
Darkened into a deep transparent blue,
All tremulous with stars, and the still even
Brought on the sweetest time to mortals given,
Their toils were all forgotten, and the hour
Refreshed their spirits with its gentle power.

XV.

Oft would they, in that season hushed and cool,
March after resting through the sultry day;
While on some clump of palms beside the pool,
Or bubbling spring, the shadowy moonlight lay,—
The clear stars guided them upon their way;
And, ruddy, in the van, a signal light
Burned, cresset-like, through all the hours of night.

XVI.

The fiery sons of Ishmael, as they scour
The stony glens of Paran with their hordes,
Watch their array afar, but dread their power;
Here first against mankind they drew their swords
In open warfare; as the native lords
Of the wild region held their free career,
And fenced the desert with the Arab spear.

XVII.

But unmolested now the mourners pass,
Till distant trees, like signs of land, appear,
And pleasantly they feel the yielding grass
Beneath their feet, and in the morning clear
They see with joy the hills of Canaan near;
The camels scent the freshness of the wells,
Far hidden in the depth of leafy dells.

XVIII.

Delicious to the weary pilgrim's eye,
Long throbbing with the sun's untempered glare,
Was the first glimpse of Canaan and its sky,—
Sweet every wind that fanned them,—passing fair
Hill, vale, and vine-slope; delicate the air
That breathed from myrtle brake, and cedar wood,
Untroubled in its ancient solitude.

XIX.

And now, emerging from the hills which keep
Their watch about the sacred border, they
Traverse the plains where oft the patriarch's sheep
Had pastured; all around deep silence lay,
Save when from high-walled towns at close of day
A barbarous music came, and fiendish cries,
Round the blue flames of Moloch's sacrifice.

XX.

At length they reach a valley opening fair
With harvest field and homestead in the sweep
Of olive-sprinkled hills,* where they prepare

* "And they came to the thrashing-floor of Atad, which is beyond Jordan, and there they mourned with a great and very sore lamentation: and he made a mourning for his father seven days."—GEN. l. 10.

The solemn closing obsequies to keep;
For an appointed time they rest, and weep
With ceaseless lamentation, and the land
Thrills with a grief it cannot understand.

XXI.

Tradition long kept memory of the place
Where the Egyptians met, and told how great
Had been the weeping,—how the ample space
Was crowded with the mourners, and their state
Showed there were princes there,—how round the gate
The rankèd chariots stood, and horses neighed,
And swarthy warriors loitered in the shade.

XXII.

The rites thus duly paid, they onward went
Across the eastern hills, and rested not
Till, slowly winding up the last ascent,
They see the walls of Hebron, and the spot
To him they bore, so dear and unforgot,
Where the dark cypress and the sycamore
Weave their deep shadows round the rock-hewn door.

XXIII.

Now Jacob rests where all his kindred are,—
The exile from the land in which of old

His fathers lived and died, he comes from far
To mix his ashes with their mortal mould.
There where he stood with Esau, in the cold
Dim passage of the vault, with holy trust
His sons lay down the venerable dust.

XXIV.

They laid him close by Leah, where she sleeps
Far from her Syrian home, and never knows
That Reuben kneels beside her feet and weeps,
Nor glance of kindly recognition throws
Upon her stately sons from that repose;
His Rachel rests far-sundered from his side,
Upon the way to Bethlehem, where she died.

XXV.

Sleep on, O weary saint! thy bed is bless'd,
Thou,* with the pilgrim-staff of faith, hast passed
Another Jordan into endless rest:
Well may they sleep who can serenely cast
A look behind, while darkness closes fast
Upon their path, and breathe thy parting word,
"For Thy salvation I have waited, Lord!"

* "With my staff I passed over this Jordan."—GEN. xxxii. 10.
"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."—Ps. xxiii. 4.

XXVI.

Long years will pass away, ere once again
Thy silence, O Machpelah! shall be stirred;
The boughs will spread unpruned, and mosses stain
The ancient stones where sings the lonesome bird;
But ne'er shall dust as saintly be interred
Within thy silent vaults, nor rites be paid
As solemn underneath thy hoary shade.

ICHABOD.

"She named the child Ichabod, saying, The glory is departed."—1 Sam. iv. 21.

Most hapless child! to thee the gate of life
Death has unbarred,—strange keeper of the door!
And thine eyes open on this scene of strife,
As thy faint mother's close for evermore.
What is thy world but one vast sable room,
With shields sepulchral hanging round its gloom?

Thy mother meek had sorrow in thy birth,
Which never vanished in redeeming joy;
Thy natal hour awoke no festal mirth,
And heard no joyous greetings, wretched boy!
Thy father lay upon his bloody bier,
And how could she who loved him linger here?

What time thou camest hither, didst thou not,
Upon the limit of that dolorous bourne,
Meet them, and him thy grandsire? Had their lot
Been thine, thou surely hadst been less forlorn.
Didst thou not see them walking, hand in hand,
Nigh the dim portals of that shadowy land?

Upon thy natal day they all went thither;
Thy father was the first, all bathed in blood;
Thy grandsire next; and she, the last, did wither
In the pure bloom of perfect womanhood,—
That gentle lady, who had mourned their sin,
Crushed in the storm which burst upon her kin.

The Priest, the Warrior, and the Wife depart,
And thou hast come upon the funeral eve;
But will thy coming cheer the drooping heart
Of Israel? thy poor mite of life relieve
This heavy sum of slaughter, and atone
For beauty, bravery, virtue, that are gone?

She whispered, clinging feebly to the edge
Of life, a name wherein all omens mingle,
And types of blackest doom,—a fearful pledge
That God had made all ears to creep and tingle
At the dread judgments which one fatal day
Had brought on guilt no blood could wash away.

Thy name has passed into a proverb; thou
Hast pointed many morals; when we see
Honours departing, mounting hopes laid low,
And glory tarnished, we remember thee:
We hear it like an echo in the aisles
Of antique temples and imperial piles.

On Grecian friezes strewn through laurel shades,
  On bronze corroded by Oblivion's rust,
On proud Palmyra's tottering colonnades,
  On ruins raked and sifted into dust,
On the dim vestiges of Babylon's walls,
And old Assyria's marble-panelled halls,—

Time's iron pen carves Ichabod!—a name
  That seems the eternal language of our sighs,
The burden of all homilies on fame,
  The sum of immemorial elegies;
The sole immortal legend that remains
To mark the site of palaces and fanes.

Thy memory shall never fade, because
  'Tis bound up with decay, and has the range
Of an unending fate. While the deep laws
  Of being shall unfold themselves through change,
And old things fade and moulder, thou shalt be
Secure of mournful immortality!

It may be well that we so little know
  Of thy succeeding life, mysterious child!
Thy features muffled with a veil of woe,
  Thou art the spirit of sorrow deep and wild,
And all thy story must be thus comprised,—
Most strangely born, most mournfully baptized.

May the dark riddle of thy life be read
In this thy baptism of tears and blood?
Was thine a blighted being? Did men dread
The quick infection of thy neighbourhood?
Or, as might chance, did days of thoughtless mirth
Disprove the dismal auguries of thy birth?

Or didst thou, in unconscious sympathy,
Die with thy kindred on thy natal night?
And born and named so sadly, didst thou sigh
Thy breath away, or sicken at the light,
And only leave the darkness of one womb,
To creep into another,—the dark tomb?

I well believe this was thy happier fate,
And that the clouded eyes of the next morn
Saw a sad pomp emerging from the gate
Of Shiloh: on one bier three bodies borne,—
The grandsire, and the mother, and the child;
All blighted,—stem, and branch, and blossom undefiled.

THE VISION FROM THE MOUNT.

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them."—ST. MATTHEW iv. 8.

ALONE, beneath the vaulted sky,
And side by side they stood,
Where rose a mountain-peak in high
And awful solitude,—
One with his cold bright eye of guile,
And on his lips a hollow smile,
An aching heart within;
The other, watching calm and grave,
With the wan look that sorrow gave
To Him that knew not sin.

Strange that upon one common spot
Their feet should once have trod,
And Time have there together brought
Man's tempter and his God;
And strange the mighty ends to tell
That stirred so deeply Heaven and Hell

Thus face to face opposed—
The stake was man's immortal life,
And this the prelude to the strife
On Calvary that closed.

They gazed in silence on the scene,
Outspreading far below,—
Hill, purple wood, and valley green,
All bathed in sunlight's glow;
Luxuriant plains and lonely cots
Sprinkled among the pleasant spots,
Where blue-veined rivers ran;
And smoke from cities far apart,
High-piled with wealth, enriched by art
And noblest works of man.

He gazed, who o'er earth's face had cast
Even there a look of gloom,
Whose withering shadow, as it passed,
Reft Eden of its bloom.
But for the ruin he had wrought,
No pity moved a gentler thought
Within that spirit dark;
And with a deadlier hate he longs
To strike the Avenger of its wrongs,—
His last and proudest mark!

He raised his hand, and through the air
A wildering vapour breathed,
And fast arose a vision fair
By false enchantment wreathed,—
Rich masques, and radiant phantoms, blent
Within a luminous element,
A shifting splendour cast,
Till, from its heaped and mingling spoils,
Unwinding all its glittering coils,
Slow moved the pageant past.

There all earth's lands and kingdoms seem
Assembled as in strife,
To cast a soft and witching gleam
Around the pride of life;
All that could tempt the sensual eye
Of wealth, and pomp, and luxury,
Was bright-reflected there;
All guerdons which, on honour's height,
May tempt Ambition's loftiest flight,
Tricked out the shining snare.

There laurels veiled the blood that stained
The trophied pride of war,
And haughty Rome dragged princes chained
To her imperial car.

And all their rifled treasuries
With sumless wealth and merchandise
  Came dazzling in her train:
Barbaric pearl and diamond shone
From lands far east of Babylon,
  And sunny Taprobane.

Fair Greece unlocked her finer store
  Of all immortal arts,
Slow camel-files from Syria bore
  The spoil that chokes her marts;
And palm-plumed Araby was there,
With ivory, silk, and tissues rare
  Wrought in the looms of Ind;
And lucid gums from isle of bloom,
Where groves of spice with faint perfume
  Enrich the evening wind.

There warriors marched in gleaming arms
  Where Fame's loud trumpet blared,
And, lured by Glory's tempting charms,
  All bloody perils dared;
There banners waved to victory's shout,
And softer instruments spoke out,
  And passioned minstrels sung,
While princes held high festival,

And on their guests the lighted hall
Its gorgeous splendour flung.

He showed Him in a jewelled wreath
All crowns that earth bestows,
But not the rankling thorns beneath
That pierce the wearer's brows.
He showed Him every specious prize
That sparkles in Ambition's eyes,
But not the pale-eyed Care
That in the height of honour dwells,
And whispers mournful oracles
Behind the princely chair.

But who may trace each saddening thought
That thrilled the Saviour's heart,
While gazing on the pageant wrought
By that false spirit's art?
He, through its rich and lustrous folds,
The dark reality beholds,—
The violence and guilt
Through which these stately empires grew,
And all the groans their glory drew,
And all the blood it spilt.

He turned his eye from royal state
Beneath high arching domes,

And saw the poor and desolate
Within a thousand homes;
The outcast wandering for his bread,
Who had not where to lay his head,
Until he found the grave;
For them his tears of pity ran,
And all who were despised by man
His spirit yearned to save.

He turned him from the empty glare
That crowned Oppression wore,
And saw the broken hearts of care
Its heavy load that bore.
He heard the withering captive's moan,
The poor defrauded labourer's groan,
Whose wrongs no law redressed;
Their sorrows on his heart were borne,
To all the weary and forlorn
He came to offer rest.

He looked, and, lo! Sin's blighting shade
Crept o'er the airy show,
And from it fast the flush decayed
Like evening's rosy glow;
The enchanter's wand in fragments fell,
Dissolved, like mist, the subtle spell,

The loaded air was cleared;
And, through the blank against the sky,
Distinct and dark, low Calvary
His naked cross upreared.

"And shall the crowns of earth," he cried,
"False fiend! have charms for me,
Who laid the crown of heaven aside
Thy fettered slaves to free?
Away with all thy glittering dross,—
Mine eye is full upon the cross,
And speeds the fateful hour,
When I, the woman's seed, shall tread
In death on thy discrownèd head,
And crush thy hated power.

"Away! thy evil star is dim,
Look up and see the sign,—
My knee bends never but to Him
Who is my God and thine!
Away! and triumph for a time,
But I will track thee by thy slime,
Foul serpent! and expel
All evil from this groaning world,
And, as before, behold thee hurled
To the abyss of hell!"

THE MIRACLES OF THE SAVIOUR.

THOUGH Thou didst come into our world by night,
And with no glory wrap Thyself about,
Yet soon around Thy goings what a light
Of beauty and of majesty broke out!

Beneath the meekness of Thy mortal guise,
His God Incarnate man disdained to own,
Though through the earthly veil before his eyes
Some gleams of that indwelling brightness shone.

Yet Nature owned Thee, in the listening pause,
The hushed and holy stillness of the land;
She knew her Maker's step; her iron laws
Relaxed their ancient rigour in Thy hand.

She saw, within Thy body's temple shrined,
Unsceptred majesty for her to greet;
Thy voice went through her elements like wind;
And all her realms poured tribute at Thy feet.

All spirits, too, here working good or ill,
Felt in Earth's air the pulse of holy breath,
Thine every footfall an electric thrill
Sent both to Heaven above and Hell beneath.

From Thine uplifted arm, and in the sound
Of Thy mild voice, went forth a power divine;
Its deeds are Time's Evangels; and around
Thy Manhood's brow—a ring of stars—they shine.

I.

The festal wine is spent, but Thou art near,
At Thy command the spring of gladness rose;
A purple shadow tints the water clear,
And every lustral vessel overflows.

Through summer suns and soft-distilling rains,
The juices crimson in the swelling grape;
But to the end which Nature slowly gains
The Lord of Nature passes at a step.

Charmed by mere contact with Thy naked feet,
The swinging waves—a floor of marble—stand,
Firm is Thy tread on Galilee to meet
The weary rowers longing for the land.

Awed by Thine eye the stormy winds are still,
The sea controls its madness at Thy frown;
And, where Thy finger points, the fishes fill
The nets which all the night hung idly down.

Thou, King of Heaven, wilt honour earthly kings,
And Cæsar's dues at Cæsar's customs pay;
A fish to Peter's hook, the stater brings,
Where, rusting in Gennesaret's ooze, it lay.

When crowds went with Thee to a desert place,
Thou wouldst not send them faint to towns remote,
But from a stripling's scanty scrip, Thy grace
For all a plentiful provision brought.

Thy blessing into his small loaves did pass,
Thy meek dividing hands held store of bread;
The Twelve went to and fro upon the grass,
Till all the rankèd multitudes were fed.

The wayside fig, so falsely clothed with leaves,
Yields to Thy simple appetite no fruit,—
The worthless tree Thy brief rebuke receives,
And presently it withers from the root.

How many are the ills that fret and waste,
Since Sin first blighted it, this frame of man!
These owned Thy presence too,—where'er it passed,
The streams of grace remedial freely ran.

Salvation, joy, and life, sprung up beneath
Thy steps; Thy shadow blessed the common road,
The tainted air waxed pure within Thy breath;
And healing virtue from thy raiment flowed.

The long-stopped ear flew open at Thy touch;
Through the dead limb a tingling vigour steals;
The wayside beggar casts aside his crutch;
And leprosy's white mask man's face reveals.

The moulded clay was then as euphrasy;
Which cleared the vision from its life-long haze;
And fettered tongues, in sudden sound let free,
Like bells long muffled, rung a peal of praise.

Heaven had its eye upon Thee from afar:
It watched the course it joyed to see begun;
Thy birth was greeted by a kindled star,
Thy death lamented by a darkened sun.

No boding planet screened it from the sight,
The Paschal moon was broad upon the sky,
When thou, O sun! didst veil thy sacred light
In sympathy with His expiring cry!

II.

Through that so fatal breach which Sin had made
In this our citadel, Death entered too,
His gloomy banner on its wall displayed,
And with a tyrant's frenzy smote and slew.

The strong man, armed securely, kept his hold,
And feared no rival in his bloody reign;
But Thou, a mightier than the Anarch old,
Didst spoil and crush him in his own domain.

Thrice, ere Thine own death undermined his sway,
Thou didst confront him in his lawless range;
Thrice from his stiffening grasp redeem the prey,
And give him warning of the coming change.

The maiden from her couch, the youth of Nain
From out his shroud, and Lazarus from his cave,
Rose at Thy summoning call to life again,
And Death could trust no more the faithless grave.

His four-days' captive,—to Thy quiet force
The King of Terrors yielded; and Decay,
The dark-winged vulture perched upon the corse,
Rose at thy rustling step, and soared away.

The Arch-Apostate, with a true presage,
Had garrisoned the earth with troops of hell,
But bootless was the war he thought to wage,
Where'er the shadow of Thy presence fell.

The first man, in God's blooming garden placed,
He could seduce and ruin with a lie,—
He met Thee fainting in the herbless waste,
And quailed before the glancing of Thine eye.

Even where his masterdom securest seemed,
He howling left the bodies he possessed;
And in the synagogues where men blasphemed,
The devils raged and trembled, but confessed.

Thy lifted finger struck the fiends with dread,—
They felt on earth that unconsuming ire
Which kindled hell before them as they fled,
Gleam forth and smite them with its scathing fire.

III.

Thy noblest gift, alas! was seldom sought
By men so sensitive to outward ill,—
The miracle which grace redeeming wrought
In the deep sphere of spirit and of will.

Thy mercy healed the deepest wound of life,
Through Nature's bitter springs new sweetness poured,
Fulfilled its longings, and assuaged its strife,
And all its beauty and its strength restored.

The power that purified the heart from sin,
That weeded out the thistles of the Fall,
And made all holy virtues bloom therein,—
This was the greatest miracle of all.

This blessed Samaria's outcast by the well,—
Unsealed the twin founts of the Magdalene's eyes,—
Threw on the robber's cross, when darkness fell
Upon Thine own, a gleam of paradise.

To crush the power of man's relentless Foe,
Thy conquering goodness made its bright displays;
And thou in self-devoted love didst go,
A Man of Sorrows, on our earthly ways.

And all the outward wonders of Thy grace
Were types of this great mystery within,—
Shadowed the full redemption of our race
From all the dark far-branching woes of sin.

Once hadst Thou seen the proud Archangel fall
Like lightning from the heaven in which he shone;
Now Thou didst drive him from man's spirit, all
The heaven in which remains to him a throne.

Yet while amazed that wondrous power I see,
Which for all other woes unwearied wrought,
More wondrous seems the deep humility
Which for its own distress took never thought.

Beneath the shadow of Sin's gilded domes,
Thou hadst not where, O Christ! to lay Thy head;
Thou sentest thousands joyful to their homes,
From deserts where their Saviour wanted bread.

Thou couldst have brought provision from the flints,
But wast content our hunger to endure;
And the uncounted wealth of royal mints
Was Thine,—but Thou for sinners' sakes wert poor.

The rich in purple robe Thy temple trod;
But Thou the poor man's garb didst meekly wear,
And daily live by trusting to the God
Who feeds the wandering sparrows of the air.

Thou once wert robed in purple, but in jest;
Once tasted Pilate's wine, but mixed with myrrh;
It was Thy corpse that was with linen dressed,
Thy grave in which the costly spices were.

Thy false apostle made his covenant good,
And to the garden led the midnight band,
While troops of armèd angels round Thee stood,
And waited but a signal from Thy hand.

But Thou, O Lamb of God! wert dragged to death,
And, sinless, didst the sinner's doom abide,
And strength immortal slumbered in its sheath,
While He who owned it groaned, and bled, and died.

O crowning miracle of matchless grace,
To man unknown, though acted every hour,
That drew the veil across the Godhead's face,
And clenched the hand upon the Godhead's power!

On earth, O Lord! we hear Thy voice no more,—
Nor see to men Thy mortal vision given,—
Yet I rejoice that what Thou didst before,
Thou still canst do in human hearts from heaven.

O work in me this mystery of Thy grace,
Uplift my spirit, by Thy power divine,
To that calm faith which, seeing not Thy face,
Rests in Thy love, and asks no outward sign!

PRESENTIMENT.

HAST thou not felt when journeying to the place
Whence some clear prospect might before thee lie,—
Some gleam of beauty,—to reward the eye,
For long dull leagues of dreary interspace,
A strange desire to mend thy lagging pace,
Which still grew stronger as the scene drew nigh,
Till one could fret at the necessity
Which bound him in the senses' strict embrace?
Such is the inward yearning of the soul
Towards the vision of the Infinite,
When Time's thick-folded mists at last unroll;
It strives to cast aside each earthly bond,
And scale the ridge between it and the light
Of God that sleeps on blessèd lands beyond.

REASON AND FAITH.

"When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me, until I went into the sanctuary of God."—Ps. lxxiii. 16, 17.

How many are the mysteries that lie
Along life's winding ways, and vex the mind
With restless speculation, vague and blind:
In vain doth Reason hold her torch on high
To trace the round of calm Infinity,
In all its sapphire clearness; in the gloom
She gropes, until she stumbles o'er a tomb;
Earth's roof of cloud to her is all the sky.
But Faith, while in the temple-court she keeps
Her midnight watch, sees up the azure deeps
God's name in starry cipher written fair,—
The vision of His Wisdom, Power, and Love,
Serenely throned these drifting mists above,
Revealed unto the upward gaze of Prayer.

THE DREAM OF CLAUDIA PROCULA,* THE WIFE OF PILATE.

"When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."—St. Matthew xxvii. 19.

PROEM.

"Leave me awhile, my child! Ever since morn
I have felt my spirit burdened, and the dread
Of some impending evil haunts my mind,—
A dim and shapeless terror. Thy sweet laugh,
My child! sounds as a discord, and thy voice
Fatigues the ear of thy distempered mother.
Go! pluck some roses for a festal wreath,
And twine them as I taught thee, for to-night

* This name is employed on the authority of some early ecclesiastical writers; Scripture, it is needless to observe, being silent on the subject. Whether correctly applied or not is of little consequence; but we feel pleasure in drawing one of whom so little is known within the sphere of a personal interest, even by so slender a link as this.

Thy father sups with Herod. They are friends
As once they were,—thanks to this Galilean.
When thou art gone, perchance an hour of sleep
May lighten me of these uneasy thoughts!"
So the fair child into the garden ran
With fawnlike swiftness, and the mother slept.

THE DREAM.

O Sleep! what sorcery is like to thine,
So subtle, so resistless? In what grove
Or garden dost thou gather the rare herbs
Whose juices have such virtue, that the soul,
Once tasting them, is on the instant loosed
From its companionship with flesh, to dart
From zone to zone more swiftly than the spark
Electric, shooting through its nerves of steel?

Silent the city lay, with all its streets
Drowsed in the glow of noon. The sultry air
Was overcharged with languor; the weak wind
Was stifled in the open, shadowless ways.
Faintly she hears the soft and liquid flow,
Of the small runnels freshening the roots
Of thick-leaved platans in the garden-walks,
And the cool plashing fountain in the court,

And as she listens, she is calmly lulled
Into a deep repose. An interval,—
How long she knows not,—but, as in old times,
And with no sense of change, she seems to be
Within her Roman mansion, on the slope
Of the low Esquiline, whence roams the eye
O'er the green champaign, with its countless loops
Of granite arches, and the fitful gleam
Of Tiber winding slow, to the white walls
Of cool Praeneste, and the Alban hills,
And the blue ridge of piny Algidus.
Again through well-known chambers, draped and dim,
She passes,—vestibules, where statues watch
In breathless immortality,—wide halls,
Where cedarn roofs are rough with stalactites
Of fretted gold, and tessellated floors
Mirror the floating movement of her robe;—
Yet on this splendour now she seems to look
But listlessly. She carries on her heart
A crushing weight of sadness. Agony
Is working in the quiver of her lip.
An unimagined misery, a dread
Presentiment of evil, wraps her soul
In gloom, and chills the inmost springs of life.
So vacantly she thought she wandered on,
With all her anguish in a tearless eye,

Till to a little chamber she has come;
One step within it, and she stands as struck
To marble. There, upon a couch, she thought,
Lay a sweet child, as if through weariness
O'ercome by balmy slumber. But 'twas sleep
Without a smile or sigh,—and as she lay,
A heavy silence throbbed within the air,
And made a swoonlike tingling in the brain,
More deep, more terrible, than that of sleep.
Fair seemed the little maiden resting there,—
Her dark eyelashes drooping down a cheek
Still lovely though unblooming, and her pale
Seraphic beauty showed the small blue veins
Upon her delicate brow. One raven tress
Had fallen loose, escaping from the fillet,
Whose pearls were duskier than the brow they bound.
Beside the couch the lady thought there lay
A withering rose-wreath, as if newly dropped
From a relaxing grasp, and in her dream
She lifted it, and with an aching heart,
Gazed on the flowers those fingers small had woven.
One rose was but a bud,—it had been plucked
Too soon,—and now the red lips of its leaves
Were shrunk and seared. "And faded art thou too,"
She thought, "my rosebud, in thine opening hour,—
Struck is the gracious promise of thy spring

By sudden blight,—thy rifled sweetness here
Lies low, nor can the sunshine nor the rain
Revive it evermore!"
In passionate grief
She seemed to sink upon her knees, and search
Those pallid features, half-beguiled to hope
Some flitting look might answer to her own.
A sudden terror shook her in this trance
Of agony,—a vague presentiment,
Which made her shrink and tremble as it came,
That she was not alone. Then timidly,
She thought, she raised her eyelids, and, behold,
Before her, standing by the farther side
Of the small couch, was One whose eye was fixed
Upon her steadfastly. It was a mild
And gentle look, that thrilled her heart, and seemed
Withal to soothe its pain, and in His eye,
A serene radiance shone, a tempered gleam,—
The mingling lights of purity and love.
Sorrow in his calm aspect seemed to veil
And chasten majesty; the settled grief
Of some intense endurance, meekly borne
In far-uplifted solitudes of thought,—
Some shadow, life-long inmate of the soul.
As thus he looked on her, seeming to read
The secret anguish that consumed her heart,

The thought, she knew not how, grew slowly up,
Still waxing stronger, till her pulses throbbed
With wavering emotion, that, beneath
These simple robes, One stood, whose heart must hold
Immortal sympathy,—some Son of Heaven,
Whose pity was the spring that moved His power.
Wherefore, it seemed to her, with all her heart
Tremblingly balanced on one doubtful hope,
Dreading a chance, so precious yet so frail,
To hazard on the cast of speech, she, still
Low kneeling, thus addressed Him: "On this couch
She lies who was my child,—now she has died,
And left me desolate;—O! canst Thou help me?"
"The damsel is not dead," He calmly said,
"But sleepeth."—O'er her features passed a smile
More like despair than sorrow.—"Then believe!"
He cried, "and doubt no more." Gently he took
The maiden's hand in His, and in a low,
Clear voice, He said, "Arise!" Even as he spake
There was a change, as if the pulse began
To beat in her thin wrist,—the flush of life
Passed swiftly o'er her cheek, a mantling bloom,
Like the warm rosy light which sunset casts
On mountain-snow,—a slumberous movement broke
The iron spell of Death,—her reddening lips
Breathed a faint sigh,—and opening her eyes,

With the enquiring wonder of a long
And ended dream, she named her mother's name,
And smiled to see her there. But marble pale,
As in a swoon of joy, the mother now
Had sunk upon the ground, and clasped the feet
Of the Deliverer. "Tell me but Thy name,"
She cried, "that I may load it evermore
With honours, and heap up with sacrifice
The altars of Thy Godhead?" "Thou hast heard
Of me," He said; "I am the Galilean;
I seek no sacrifice but one. Lay thou
Thy heart upon Mine altar, and adore
Thy false ancestral gods, who cannot save,
No more!" A silence closed upon His words,
And he was gone as if a sudden cloud
Had quenched a cheerful sun-gleam of the air.

O Sleep! what sorcery is like to thine,—
So bland, yet so prevailing? By what art
Canst thou the shadow on Life's dial move
Even as thou listest? Oft I think of thee
As seated in some lone and glimmering cave,
With pentagram and sigil on its walls,
Where to the drowsy, never-ceasing hum
Of thy revolving spindle, thou shalt draw
A moment's slender thread out endlessly

Into a dread eternity of thought.
There at the waving of thy magic wand
Time shuts and opens, narrows and expands,
As with the brazen joints and cylinders
Of the Etruscan tube. Like shreds of foam
On the smooth current of a rapid stream,
The years return or pass without a sound;
We live down hoary cycles, and awake
To find we have not slept one little hour.

That Image vanished, but the dream went on:
From the disordered elements of thought,
As after a long interval and blank
Of memory, the vision shaped itself
Again. The mingling shadows and the forms
That wavered in the ripples of the mind,
Settled by slow degrees as it grew calm,
And were incarnate with the breath of life.

It seemed that after months had glided past,
A day marked golden in the calendar
Came round, when all Rome's noblest matrons went
To the temple of Diana, with the pomp
Of sacrifice, to laud the goddess born
With bright Apollo in the laurelled isle,
And in white-terraced Ephesus adored.

And she was there; her presence graced the rite,
When with a stately pace, through the broad streets,
Went the religious multitude; and ne'er,
She thought, had Dian's festival been kept
With equal honours, nor a prouder band
Of worshippers. Conspicuous in the van,
It seemed to her, she walked, chosen to lead
The rite by acclamation of her peers.
In that patrician throng the foremost place
Had fallen to her, but with a burdened heart
She the dread symbols to the altar bore.
No pride was sparkling in her eye, no joy
Of gratified ambition flushed her brow;
Her cheek was pale and sorrow-worn, her eye
Was overcast with thought, and even the smile
Of the fair child beside her, whose sweet face
Was lighted up with gladness, failed to win
One look, responsive to her guileless joy.

. . . . . .

Sadly she watched the victim's trickling blood
Crimson the flamen's knife; sadly she joined
In the melodious chanting of the hymn.
The rite now ended, her companions left
The temple; but some impulse, so she thought,
Urged her to linger. Through long corridors,
Which echoed to her footfall, wearing still

Her robes of ministration, she passed on,—
Her daughter by her side. Through secret rooms
She wandered, in a vacancy of thought,—
Through crypt and pillared portico, and all
The ample shadowy range of twilight-courts,
Until she seemed again to stand before
The altar. Priest and votary were gone,—
Silent the sanctuary lay, which late
Rung with the sound of tuneful instruments,
And voices silver-clear. She sate her down
Hard by the altar; but her bosom still
Heaved with the tumult of her thoughts,—a mist
Fell on her eyes,—each moment was a step
Down some dark endless winding-stair of woe,
Till the long-pent emotion struggling found
An utterance; and, trembling at her words,
She cried, "Oh, Galilean! if indeed
Thou art, and Thou alone, to be adored,
Appear, and dissipate these lingering doubts!"
She spake, and, e'er the hollow echo died
In the still temple, she was conscious He
Before her stood once more. Alas! how changed,
How wasted now! and with what deep-worn trace
Of suffering in his frame. Sorrow, indeed,
Had all but quenched her fear through the sole sense
Of sympathy. Those Godlike brows were bound

With a green corded wreath, its cruel thorns
Sheathed in the living flesh,—the stiffened hair
Clung round His temples,—down His sunken cheek
Large blood-drops trickled slowly,—and a robe
Of faded purple loosely wrapped His form;
His visage wrinkled with untimely care,
The anguish of a self-included soul,
There writing its stern secret. Yet, withal,
His features wore that sweet embodied charm
Of grace immortal that had made them look
More beautiful than man's. His eye still gleamed
With love that triumphed over all its wrongs,
And pity, that o'ermastered by its strength
The utmost rage of evil,—shone with clear
And spiritual light, wherein no fire
Of earthly passion mingled. With a look
Of sadness, piercing deeper than reproach,
The lady thought He fixed on her His eye,
Thus speaking: "Thou hast called, and I have come!
Thou lookest on these wounds,—regard them well:
Thy husband's hand hath made them. Even now
He hastens to the judgment-seat, to judge
And to condemn me,—Me, his God and thine!"

And, on the instant, fast as evening clouds
Stream upward from a mountain top, the mists
Were lifted from her brain. The eventful dream

Was ended, and all trembling, but convinced,
The dreamer woke.

THE AWAKING.

With strangely dazzled look,
Her eyes searched all the chamber, while her child
Ran to her with a rose-wreath, and exclaimed,
"Mother! the chaplet! and my father says
This very night he'll wear it, when he sups
With Herod." Her words faltered, for a shout
Came from the court below, and, following fast,
Another and a louder. "O my child!"
The mother cried, "what mean these angry sounds?"
"My father said but now," the little maid
Replied, "when I was showing him my wreath,
That he was hastening to the judgment-seat;
For a strange prisoner, of whom I have heard
Thee and my father speak,—the Galilean,—
Was this day to be judged. This must be He;
Let us look forth, and we may see Him while
He passes through the court. The child ran out,
Through the half-open casement, to a wide
And lofty balcony. With thoughts and fears
Unutterable stirring in her mind,
The mother followed her, and placed herself

Where all was visible that passed below.
She glanced down timidly, and, in the midst
Of a fierce thronging crowd, who screamed and yelled
As if athirst for blood, she saw One come
With feeble staggering step. Rude arms were raised
In violent menace round,—reproach and scorn
Assailed Him from a thousand furious tongues,—
But His lips moved not. As she looked, there stepped
A soldier forth and smote Him in the face,—
The Sufferer fell, and all the rabble jeered.
They dragged Him as He lay along the ground,—
His hands were bound with thongs, His thick, damp hair
Was clotted all with blood,—and, as He rose
And crept with pain, one cried, "How will He bear
The cross?" and all the rabble jeered again.
At length, beneath the balcony whereon
She stood, the Sufferer came. He paused
A moment, and looked up. His eye met hers,—
Piercing and pure,—and its calm glance revealed
His knowledge of her woe. It thrilled her heart
With the quick sense that He had been with her
Unseen,—come silently unto her side
In that dim land of shadows, and controlled
The wild and shifting movement of her dream.

"Still let him drink,—the braggart soon shall grow
An empty noisy chatterer like the ape,—
At last, in all uncleanness grovelling low,
The vilest of the brutes in human shape!"

Still in the vine-leaves hung the vapours grey,
When Priest, and Fire, and Altar vanished all,
Nor dreamt the patriarch, on his homeward way,
It was the shadow of his future fall!

THE TEMPLE OF SAIS.

In Egypt's golden time, a temple stood
In Sais, by the branches of the Nile,
Where sages many a mystic art pursued,
And priests and pilgrims thronged the sacred pile.

Thither came votaries from all the land,—
Grey-bearded age was there, and blooming youth;
And o'er the porch some priestly artist's hand
Had traced, in symbols, much of occult truth.

First was the figure of an Aged Man,
Who crept along, and looked upon the ground,
And by his side a bright-haired Stripling ran,
With sparkling eye, and brow with myrtle crowned.

Here soared an Eagle upwards, all the while
Looking as if he dared the sun to dim
His ardent vision,—there a Fish of Nile
Seemed in another element to swim.

And last was pictured all the hideous length
Of a huge Crocodile,—each iron scale
That ridged the monster's spine, his sinewy strength,
And the dull gleaming of his bronzèd mail.

"If you would understand each mystic sign,"
Thus spake a priest to pilgrims gathered round,
"Give ear before you pass within the shrine,
Whilst I their deep significance expound.

"The Old Man and the Boy,—this group implies
The sense concerns grave age and careless youth;
The Eagle, sharp of sight, denotes the wise
All-seeing One who loves the heart of truth.

"That animal unclean, the Fish of Nile,
Which the pure gods detest, doth symbolize
Hatred and loathing; and the Crocodile
That pride which oft assumes devotion's guise.

"Now hear in full the solemn oracle,
And shun the worship the immortals hate,—
'O ye who soon must bid the world farewell,
And you who are but entering through its gate!

" 'Know that the gods, from whose all piercing eyes
Night hath no veil, and human hearts no shroud,
Look to the spirit of the sacrifice,
And hate the impious offerings of the proud.'"

THE PILGRIMS: AN APOLOGUE.

I.

Four Pilgrims set forth at morning light to reach before evening the Golden City.

FOUR Pilgrims rose before the dawn
To reach, ere close of day,
A royal town, whose turrets rose
Ten weary leagues away.
They grasped their staves, and firmly bound
Their dusty sandals on,
And started forth ere up the East
The ruddy day-spring shone.
They knew the gates were shut at eve
On all who were without;
That savage beasts through all the night
Prowled sullenly about;
That many a laggard pilgrim's bones
Were bleaching on the plain,—
And fast they strode along the road,
That happy hold to gain.
O who shall first behold the hill
Those golden turrets crown?
O who is he who first may see
The marble-templed town?

II.

The Pilgrims grow weary because of the burden and heat of the day.

They struck their staves upon the ground,
  Which rung beneath their tread,—
Still higher clomb the rounded sun,
  And faster still they sped.
Their shortening shadows called to them
  More bravely on to press;
And thus they cheered away the thought
  Of toil and weariness:—
"O joy to enter through the gate!
  O joy to be at home!
To hear the welcome shout,—At last
  The wanderer hath come!"
Then silently they journeyed on,
  And none his mate addrest;
But all the sweeter eve will be,
  And welcomer the rest.
Their shadows shrink, the white sun darts
  His fiery arrows down;—
O happy he who first may see
  The marble-templed town!

III.

That evil thing, Hasty Passion, leadeth one of the Pilgrims astray.

At noon some palms across the way
Their broad, cool shadow cast,—
A sparkling well gushed forth,—the birds
Sang blithely as they passed.
Each pilgrim to his fellow spake,
And bade him be of cheer,
When from the trees three men came forth,
And eyed them with a sneer.
They followed them with bitter words,
With flouting gibe and laugh,
Till roused to anger one stepped round,
And fiercely raised his staff.
On him the strangers rushed, with each
A weapon in his hand,
And soon the feeble palmer-staff
Was shivered like a wand.
They dashed him wounded on the plain,—
Fast flowed the red blood down;—
O hapless he who ne'er shall see
The marble-templed town!

IV.

That evil thing, Sensual Pleasure, leadeth astray another.

Mournfully onwards went the three,
They cannot turn nor wait,—
O, if they should not reach the town,
Ere closing of the gate!
The hot sun glows, no palm-tree throws
Its shadow o'er the way,
And, parched with thirst, they faint beneath
The burden of the day.
They see some camels near a tent
Where other wayfarers rest,
Who, as they pass, with courtesy
The weary band addrest.
They bid them drown their thirst in wine,
And hold a goblet up,—
One turns aside into the tent,
And quaffs the mantling cup:
He thought of the long weary way,
And then he sate him down;—
O wretched he who ne'er may see
The marble-templed town!

V.

The two remaining Pilgrims are assaulted by a grievous temptation.

They heard the merry shouts that rose
From out the revellers' tent,
And many a sad thought stirred beneath
Their silence as they went.
Three hours from noon the sun had crept
Still farther down the sky,
When, as they journeyed, on the left
They heard a joyful cry.
And one ran up whose hand was full
Of coins of ruddy gold,—
"Come, follow me," he cried, "and share
A mine of wealth untold.
For years I knew of treasures hid
Within a secret spot,
About a bow-shot off, and long,
But vainly, for them sought;
But Fortune hath, with tardy smile,
My toils at last repaid:
This gold is from a jar which I
Have shivered with my spade.

VI.

That evil thing, Covetousness, leadeth astray the third Pilgrim.

"Now turn aside, and share the spoil
That is before us cast,—
You well may trust the generous heart
That hailed you as you passed.
The brazen vases stand in rows,
Brim-full of gems and gold,
Coins, ingots, heavy chains, inwrought
By hands of craftsmen old."
One paused a while and thought, "What harm
If I should turn aside?
'Tis but a moment,"—and he left
The highway with his guide.
He sees the dusky gold, the pearls,
The chains that dimly shone,
And all his thoughts of home and friends
Are on the instant gone.
That evil thing, the lust of wealth,
Up in his heart hath grown;—
O wretched he who ne'er shall see
The marble-templed town!

VII.

The fourth Pilgrim goeth sorrowfully on his way, but keepeth his integrity.

All clouded were the Pilgrim's eyes
And heavy was his heart,
When from his side he saw his friend
For evermore depart.
The last of four that rose at dawn,
He goes upon his way,
And now the lengthening shadow shows
The pauseless flight of day.
More carefully he girds his loins,
More firmly grasps his staff,
Though, as he passes, oft he hears
The loud insulting laugh,
And sees the finger of his foes
Who point him out to scorn,
As the fond fool who madly dares
An enterprise forlorn:
And oft to lead his steps astray
They veil their hate with smiles,
And seek with smooth and flattering words
To lure him to their wiles.

VIII.

The Pilgrim reacheth a mount, whence he hath a cheering vision of the Golden City.

Though often with a sinking heart,
Yet with a constant mind,
The pilgrim journeyed on in hope,
Nor ever looked behind.
But when at last with toil he gained
A hill's umbrageous brow,
How fair a vision lighted up
The spacious plain below!
The Golden City spread afar,
All reddened with the light,
And radiant palaces and towers,
And marble temples white;
And fresh through richest verdure ran
A river clear and cool,—
Sure never to a pilgrim's eye
Was sight so beautiful.
His face is bright, his heart is light,
The elastic soul doth bound
Within him, and his foot at last
Hath touched the holy ground.

IX.

He entereth through the gate into the City, and findeth welcome and rest.

He passes through the gate, and hears
The voice of joyful psalms,—
And white-robed citizens come forth
To greet him, bearing palms;
And all the mingling bells ring out,
And all the minstrels sing,—
Sure never to a pilgrim's ear
Were sounds so ravishing.
Harp, cittern, lute, and dulcimer,
How sweetly do they play!
How kind the glances and the smiles
That meet him on the way!
They clothe him with a snowy robe,
They lead him to the feast,
And there the Prince of all the land
Bids welcome to his guest.
And thus the minstrels sing, while goes
The peaceful evening down:—
"O happy he who now doth see
The marble-templed town!"

THE ABBOT AND FOOL.

THE Fool made mirth in the convent-hall,
While the Abbot and monks were feasting all,—
"Now, sirrah, come hither," the Abbot cried,
And he took up a staff that lay by his side;
"With this staff in my name you will promise to greet
The veriest fool you may chance to meet."
The monks applauded with hearty laugh,
And the Fool assented and took the staff.

Not long after the Abbot fell sick,
And he lay on his bed breathing short and quick;
All who saw how he gasped for breath
Knew that his sickness would end in death.
For the parting soul many masses were said;
And monks were kneeling about his bed,
And friends stood round with looks of gloom,
When the Fool came softly into the room.

"Alas!" said the Abbot, with heavy moan,
"That I must leave all, and be quickly gone!"
"And whither, dear master, must thou go,"
Asked the Fool, "from the friends who love thee so?"
"I must go to a country far away,
A summons is come that I must obey."
"But if thou must go, thou hast treasures rare,—
These thou wilt take, and be happy there!"

"Alas!" said the Abbot, "though loth of mind,
My jewels and gold I must leave behind."
"But, then, you have surely out of your store
Sent the choice of all that you loved before?"
"Alas!" said the Abbot, with mortal groan,
"There is nothing prepared, yet I must be gone;
I have made no provision against the way,
And a message is come that brooks no delay!"

"Nothing! but, sure, you have taken heed
To secure a friend to supply your need?"
"I have none!" he shrieked, "for I wished not to go,
And that makes the journey so fearful now!"
"Here, then, is a staff which may stand thee in stead,"
And he laid it down on the Abbot's bed;
"If what thou hast spoken be true, I greet
The veriest fool I ever did meet!"

THE BIRD AND THE BEE.

THE Bird is your true Poet. I have seen him,
When the snow wrapped his seeds, and not a crumb
Was in his larder, perch upon a branch,
And sing from his brave heart a song of trust
In Providence, who feeds him though he sows not,
Nor gathers into barns. Whate'er his fears
Or sorrows be, his spirit bears him up.
Cares ne'er o'ermaster him, for 'tis his wont
To stifle them with music. Out of sight
He buries them in the depth of his sweet song,
And gives them a melodious sepulture.
He teaches me philosophy,—yea, more,
He leads me up to Faith.
Your busy Bee
No favourite is of mine. There is no music
In that monotonous hum. To me it seems
A trumpet, which the little Pharisee
Sounds, that the common people of the field
May well regard his industry, and mark

How he improves the sunshine. Even that song
Dies with the flowers; for when the dreary days
Of winter come, he folds his wing to lie
In his luxurious halls, and there amidst
His magazines of daintiest food, and vaults
Brimming with luscious amber-coloured wine,
The spiritless sluggard dreams away his hours;
Or if he wake, 'tis but to gorge himself
In solitude with the rich cloying fare
Of an exclusive feast. His hospitality
No stranger ever shares. Heedless he sees
His mates of summer droop and starve before
His frozen gates. He revels deep within;
Without they die: yet the small misanthrope
Shall guard his treasures with a surly sting!

THE PEASANT AND THE POET.

How diverse are the resting-points of thought
Whence mortal minds, all quickened by one breath,
Behold this glorious world!
The Peasant sate
Under an alder by a river's side
At noon. It was the warm and pleasant time
Of early summer. All the air was sweet
With breath of violets, and the blackbird spoke
To the hushed woods at intervals, or threw
Out of the thicket snatches of sweet song
In the caprices of his fearless joy.
A gladsome life was humming in the air
And stirring in the grass; small insects swam
In eddying dances o'er the rippling stream,
Which shed a coolness round it;—but the eye
Of him who sat so near to Nature's heart
Was blank and dull,—his sluggish soul unstirred
By those strong pulses of abounding life.

Now looking anxiously from the thin clouds,
That flecked the soft blue sky, to an emerald patch
Of springing wheat, which had not for some days
Been watered by the small refreshing rains,
His brow was clouded with a deep distrust.
As thriving, but as churlish as the Jew
Who sheared his sheep in Carmel, he had reaped
His harvests from his youth, and never knew
The appointed course of nature fail,—but learned
No thankfulness. It was his wont to watch
And wear out the slow passage of the months
With sighing, and, untutored by the past,
To chide the sunshine for one ray too bright,
And count suspiciously the drops of rain.
Such minds, case-hardened in their selfishness,
Can take no view of mighty laws at work
Beyond the narrow limits of one grange
Or shire. They never balance private loss
Against the general gain,—nor apprehend
The genial mystery of life, and growth,
And fruitfulness, in even passage round
The world. They fret that highest Providence
Stands never at their middle point, ne'er marks
The several seasons off, nor intersects
The elements by lines as clear and sharp
As the degrees upon a weather-glass.

No lesson had this vacant soul derived
From the deep symbols which the universe
Held ever in his eye,—no charm discerned
In its still varying aspects. For to him
The world was voiceless. Never to his heart
Came from its tuneful movement those accords
Which, through the lingering seasons, sound for those
Whose ears, by thoughtful discipline, incline
Unto its sweet and spiritual song.

Upon the further bank of the clear stream,
That wandered through the alders at his feet
With shallowy, lulling noise, rose a green slope
O'ergrown with golden broom,—the pleasant haunt
Of birds, whose voices rang through all the brake
In revelry of music. To this height
A youth now climbed, with light and buoyant step,
Crushing the thyme-blooms where they clustered low
Among the roots of grass, or sinking soft
In velvet mosses. He had walked within
Thy myrtle grove, O gentle Poesy!—
With old philosophies, sublimely taught
In Attic or in Alexandrian schools,
His strenuous soul had grappled. His dim lamp
Had shone beneath the starlight, while he bent
O'er pages wherein patient thought beholds

The image of the Future in the Past,—
Gleans mellow wisdom from the ripe-sheaved fruits
Of old experience,—and detects the springs
Of action, which, elastic and unworn,
Vibrate through all varieties of life,
Fulfil the will of sovereign Providence,
And move the world through darkness, fear, and change,
Towards a brighter destiny.
To him
Earth still her look of ancient glory wore,
Nor faded was the rich empyreal light
From mountain, wood, and sea. His fervid mind
Was conscious of an impulse and a glow,—
Of stirring powers, whence, in some finer mood,
The radiance of imagination gleamed,
As the clear fire waves upwards from a soil
Instinct and quick with bubbling naphtha-springs;
And fancies trembled through it with a play
Of shifting hues, like needles of the frost
That sparkle in the sunlit Arctic air.
Not yet had chilling disappointment breathed
Upon his generous ardour, nor had Death
Within the charmèd circle of his hopes
Made threatening entrance, nor ingratitude
Shattered his faith in man. Unknown to him
Was that sharp sorrow which is born of Time,

Which, like the shadow, lengthens on our path
As life slopes from its noon. So now he girt
And braced his spirit for ennobling toil,
That, when the welcome summons came, he might
Play well his part upon the crowded stage.
The early summer dawn had called him up
To studious labour, cheerfully resumed;
And wearied now with unrelaxing thought,
He sauntered forth to pass no idle hour
Under the freshness of the open sky.
The beauty of this summer-festival
Of Nature stole into his inmost heart.
Afar, a soft blue film, a trembling bloom
Of light was on the landscape; Earth was hushed
As in a dream of its most innocent prime,
When it lay folded in the arms of God.
The sky was fair as that whose crystal air,
Oft on old holy twilights, angels clove
To meet with man, and droop their shining wings
By some clear lake of Eden.
'T was as if
A mist which dimmed his eyes had passed away.
This effluence of glory lighting up
God's wide creation, raised in solemn joy
His mind to Him whose Spirit lives through all,
And gives all breath and bloom. As if he saw

The universe in God's immediate smile,
Silent and blessèd lying, he was moved
To thanksgiving far deeper than delight.
Still gazing there with eye insatiate,
And heart that beat with rapture near akin
To pain, he half-unconscious spoke aloud,
As the full current of his thoughts ran free :—

"This visible world is the transparent woof
Whereon the spirit figures to itself
Its fleeting images. The forming mind
Creates and blends the colours, pencils out
The whole device of that mysterious web,
Whose rich entangled cipher represents
All spiritual light and shadow. Hence to some
The curtain of the universe is dyed
With black and purple hues; its sombre folds
Hang close and heavy, loading all with gloom,—
Or to some viewless influence move and shake,
Like vapours warping on a breeze remote.
In other eyes, it quivers as a blue
And lucid veil, investing forms of sense
With softer loveliness, and with a blush
Of tints more beautiful than those of dawn.
But 'tis the mind itself that radiates
This light, or spreads this darkness round the world.

The flakes of crimson cloud that drift at even
Through a clear sky, that undulates with waves
Of amber light,—the shadowy up-coming
Of evening through the element,—the slow
Arising of the moon behind a grove,—
The golden-mailèd legions of the sky,
Led on by that white star that shines so pure
And brilliant in its singleness,—the haze
Of sunlight on the sea, where water blends
With fluent air,—the glooms of summer woods,—
The misty blueness of the distant hills,—
Are beautiful; their fascination charms
The sense; but theirs is beauty of the mind
Not less than of the eye. To him who loves,—
The thought of the belovèd one, who lights
Both hemispheres of Memory and Hope,
Where Hope makes day, and Memory moonlit night,
Is blended with them all,—yea, beautifies
All nature with a lustre of its own.
And to the glance of him who lives by Faith,
Whose hopes have overspired the cloud of sense,
Whose heart still points to Heaven,—this glorious
world
Is as a sacred page illuminate,
And charactered in stainless hues of light
With holy mysteries. Each form of life

Or growth,—each calm, unconscious mood of things
Fixed in eternal sameness, deep and still,—
Each changing aspect of creation's face,
Give nourishment to thoughts that live in things
Unseen. Each voice or sound that meets his ear
From hedge or woodland, vale or open field,
Touches some spring of feeling, or reveals
Some parable of truth. Again perchance
That Galilean scene of old will live
Upon the eye, when He whose mind could sound
The abysmal clearness of the thoughts of God,
Expounded His divine philosophy
By types familiar to the surface-glance
Of common men. Thus all that he beholds,
Becomes the sign of things whose archetypes
Are shrined for ever in the holy mount!"

The Peasant listened to these words, and more,
Then spoken, which 'twere needless to rehearse.
"I have heard of such!" he said, and eyed the youth
Not without pity. To his heart untuned
They sounded like some idle rhapsody,
The loose-linked utterance of a dreamy mind.

So in mid-ocean two shell-crusted planks,
Wrenched on some night of tempest from the ribs

Of ships wrecked far asunder, meet and touch
A moment, drifted by the changeful winds
Or currents cross,—but only meet to part
For ever, and heave onwards restlessly
Over the trackless waves to opposite poles.

TO WORDSWORTH.

Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim
Credebat libris; neque, si malè cesserat, usquam
Decurrens aliò, neque si bene; quo fit ut omnis
Votivâ pateat veluti descripta tabellâ
Vita senis. HORACE.

To thee, my latest and not least-loved guide,
In those sequestered haunts where finer minds
Oft wander, where in still retreats of thought,
They pass untroubled days: to thee, the true
And Master-Poet of our time, I owe
Some tribute, and would fain connect thy name
With these, the records of some musing hours.

I have not looked upon thy living face,
Though once, a wayfarer, I stood beside
Thy gate, desirous to fulfil a wish
Long cherished. But a cloud had gathered then
Over thy dwelling; and the shrouded form
Of Death sate by thy threshold. I would not
Thrust myself in between thee and thy woe,—

So with some leaves from thy thick clustering sheaves
Of laurel, I passed up along the lake,
Upon a way familiar with thy feet,
Subdued before the sacredness of grief.

It was a peaceful evening of June,
When not a wind was whispering in the reeds
Of Rydal. Island, tree, and purpling hill
Beheld their shadows charmed to steadfastness
In the unbreathing water. The low chime
Of the church-bell spoke musical and clear
Over the lake.

'Tis pleasant, in these scenes
Of strange luxuriance and beauty spread
Around me,—brakes of myrtle, orange-groves,
Rose-thickets shadowed by the slanting palm,
And trellised vineyards, ripening in the warmth
Of Libyan skies,—to image once again
That summer eve, when I foot-wandering went
Through sweeter vales, and by the hedgerows wild,
Where blooming hawthorn scented English air.

Much in these past days I mused
Amid the scenes from which thy verse has drawn
Its genial inspiration ;—much since then,
In other lands, of what my life of mind
In silent growth, has owed to strains of thine,

In their clear insight like a finer sense,
And meditative wisdom, which revealed
The charm of nature. For to me it chanced,
In my unguided youth, to wander far,
And, parched with intellectual thirst, to drink
At those polluted wells, which, for the bane
Of after-times, a strong but reckless art
Had opened. There I lingered long, in hope
To find refreshment, but strange bitterness
Was in the draught, and after it no sense
Of inward strength and freedom. Then, when first,
In this revulsion of the heart, I turned
To paths despised before, and felt the power
That dwelt in thy tranquillity,—the thoughts
That come from still communion with the forms
Of nature, whose low voices seemed to haunt
Thy song, as wind among the forest leaves,—
It was as if, while straying far and lone
Through a wide desert, I had suddenly
Found a green valley folded in fair hills,
And in the midst a fresh and lucid pool,
In whose unwrinkled deeps, each little spire
Of grass, each tuft of rushes, and each rock
Moss-stained that overhung it, had most clear
Reflection, with the statelier images
Of tree and girdling mountain. There I since

Have tarried willingly, still finding joy
And solace in that unpolluted air.
Nor, while for this more selfish gain I own
My thankfulness, am I less deeply stirred
In heart, when, glancing wider, I can trace
In purer tone and feeling, deeper love
And reverence for truth, and a return
To old and long-neglected paths of thought
(Paths through the thick-grown forest early cleared
By our forefathers), blessings manifold
The general age inherits with thy lays.

Enough we had, more than enough, of wild
And gloomy portraitures,—proud spirits driven
To frenzy by their passions, foaming out
Their shame,—minds whose depravity became
An inspiration, breathing through despair,
And clothing blasphemy with burning words.
There Vice made men heroic,—life appeared
A masquerade of phantoms, raised above
Our mortal stature, who, with devilish wails
From under their dark vizors, and anon
With devilish laughter, raved across its stage.

There came the sated sensualist, well-skilled
In self-anatomy, on whose thin lips

The bitterness of a bad heart frothed up
In sneers; with him, the sceptic, nobly-born,
But wretched, through whose strange soliloquies
Faltered some guilty secret, that might throw
A charm of mystery round his blighted youth.
Nor were there wanting outlaws, and self-spurned
Apostates, who, in ruin, still retained
Some mild redeeming virtue,—who could lead
Reckless and stormy lives, and trample shame
And honour under foot, and shout for joy
Through the dun smoke of battle, yet recall
Their fiery spirits, when their hawk-like flight
Was in its highest circle, to the lure
Of love; for love was linked with all, and threw
Its bland enchantment over scenes of blood.
Then the scene shifted to the chime of sweet
Voluptuous numbers,—gorgeous visions flushed
The odour-steaming air, rich stainèd lights,
And silken draperies, and lutes that breathed
A slumberous music to a damsel's tale,—
A lovelorn maiden, passing fair, who clung
To some strong, desperate nature with a fond
Fidelity, as the green plant twines round
A blasted tree.
And this was human life.
Such was its inward struggle, such its griefs

And joys,—for such our sympathies were claimed:
For wickedness that dragged its secret shame
Before the world,—for suffering that raised
Its selfish wail, unhumbled for the guilt
That caused it,—for despair which, from its depths,
At heaven still hurled defiance,—and for pride
That bore its curse in sullen self-retreat,
And unrepenting bared its Cain-like brow.
Thus to its highest heaven could song exalt
All that was false, unnatural, and vile.

Out of this faint and sickly atmosphere,
This strife of hateful passion, thou wert first
To lead us into pure and liberal air.
Thy skilful hand was first to find the chord
To which the heart responded,—from it drew
Mysterious harmonies, and struck it till
The mild vibration, drowned at first, rose clear,
Like some sweet, silvery voice, over the din
Of clamorous instruments. It held the time
Charmed by its mere simplicity, that made
A silence for itself, till all around
Its echoes multiplied and filled the land.
The freshness of the vernal woods possessed
Thy stately numbers,—sounds of summer-hills,—
The goings of the wind in the close tops

Of trees,—the babbling of the brook, that seems
To the old man's heart a voice from far-off days
Of childhood,—and from these its tones of strength
And tenderness it drew. So thou stoodst forth
The Interpreter of Nature to the mind,
To teach us all that lay beneath her sounds
And silences, her changes and repose,
The mystery of her kindredness with man,—
The likeness of a human face beneath
The veil of Isis, answering smiles and tears,—
An aspect shifting to our every mood,—
A beating heart that presses up to ours
In concord; to explain what we had felt
In hours of tranquil thought, but wanted words
To utter, and were glad without the will
To trace the hidden wellspring of our joy.
'T was thine, like some hierophant, to show
The fine relations which, unto the mind,
Invest the universe with glory and light
Unknown to sense; to make the soul infuse
Its own life into nature's lifeless forms,—
And then, receiving what it gave, to move
Among them as its thoughts; to take them up
Into its very substance, and evoke,
Where 'er it turned, clear shapes and images
Of its emotions, flushed with fancy's hues.

Thus, interpenetrated by the mind,
The simplest scenes and pleasures to thy glance
Were beautified; and not a lonely bird
From whose small heritage of song thy soul
Was not enriched, and not a woodland flower
Over which thou, full-hearted, didst not stoop
And give it benediction. The blue smoke
Curling from cottage roofs awoke the sense
Of sympathy within thee with the life
Beneath. It spoke to thee of humble men,—
Their trials and their sorrows, the hard strife
Of poverty, the daily round of toil,
The anxieties of sickness, clouded days
Slow darkening to death. The gleams of joy
With which the meanest lot is brightened made
Thee glad, and all its genial virtues found
With thee their celebration. Thus thy art
Stood singular, like some pure instrument
Or temple-pipe reserved for lofty themes,
To chant, in solemn tones, the nobleness
Of love, and trust, and patience; to expound
The law of kindness, the calm power which dwells
In virtue and in gentleness; to show
The heroism of a life which walks
With meek endurance in its separate path

Of suffering; and the loveliness of hope,
And home-bred innocence, and simple truth.

And hence the freedom, purity, and glow
That gave thy verse its charm. Its voice was strong
And musical, as of the sounds that haunt
The hills,—its movement graceful in the joy
Of overflowing life,—its bloom the healthy flush
And freshness ministered by moorland winds
And bracing mountain air. Through all its veins
Health's glad unconscious pulses rose and fell,—
The beating of a manly heart was heard.

Such are thy well-earned honours; high, compared
With those inherited from powers debased,
And genius that could stoop to be the slave
Of sensual passion. It was well to lead
A wildered age back to the love and truth
Of uncorrupted nature. Yet renown
Still higher, which thou mightst have claimed and won,
Is wanting. There are deeper needs thy hand
Hath left unsounded,—and the loftiest ends,
Which this mysterious nature lives to serve,
Thine eye surveyed not. To those heights serene
Whence flow the springs of holy thought and deed,

Whence come the powers that mould immortal man
To his full strength of being, it is strange
That in this clearness of the Christian light
Thy strain has seldom soared. Thy chosen task
Might have been done, yet this, to crown it well,
Not left undone. For Nature, though endued
With ministries of good, which may avail
To soothe the spirit, fevered in the strife
And fret of selfish passions, and assuage,
As by the virtue of an anodyne,
That restlessness of heart which earthly cares
Engender, is most impotent to reach
That seat of strife secluded in the depths
Of spirit and of will,—the shadowy world
Wherein loud conscience and the broken law,
In dark array, against the trembling heart
Marshal their terrors, when the trumpet-peal
That rang on cloudy Horeb sounds again.
In that great resurrection of the soul,
When new-born thoughts, like seeds in the spring-
mould,
Begin to burst their cells, and germinate
With restless life, it searches everywhere
For light, and only finds it when it looks
Where, high o'er drifting clouds, the signal-gleam
Of hope is set in heaven. Once the long trance

Is broken, and it feels the deadly weight,
The mystery of sin,—when struggling hard
To rend its bonds asunder, it but twines
The meshes of the net more closely round,—
That strength and power, through which it may attain
To freedom, from a higher sphere must come
Than the low circle of the universe
Horizoned by the eye. It faints beneath
This crushing load, the consciousness of guilt,
Whereto a haunting terror ever cleaves,
A shadow dark as death. Beholding now
The true end of its being, and the claim
Of an eternal law to all its love
And loyalty, the sense of its revolt
From God, and willing vassalage to sin,
Strikes through it as a pang, and, self-condemned,
Self-loathed, it bows its head without a plea,
Falls down before the awful light which hides
Eternal Majesty. O wondrous depth
Of grace unsearchable! a trembling hope
Is, for the lowly mourner, born from out
The travail of his soul,—a still small voice
Bids him look up, and see the Sacrifice
Upon the altar, and the pleading Priest
Upon the throne of Heaven, and, as he looks,
Speaks to him of forgiveness, soothes and stills

The alarm of conscience, and, with gentle strength,
Goes forth through all the regions of the soul,
And charms them into holy quietness.

Such is the reconcilement nature needs,—
Solution for her doubts, abiding peace
For an inbred disquietude, and health
For a deep-seated plague, not to be reached
Save through His ministering grace benign
Who has revealed Himself to man, apart
From inarticulate symbols, in the Word,
As a redeeming God. At peace with Him
Through this divine atonement, light is shed
On all the high relations which link man
To the Eternal, as his native seat
And heritage of being. Through the veil
That once concealed the shrine, an issuing gleam,—
Effulgence of the inner brightness,—falls
Upon the mind, and in the light of God,
As its clear element and new-born sense,
The eye, unsealed, beholds the glory of things
Invisible, the beauty of holiness,
The fair perfections that invest and crown
The Godhead, and in these man's perfect bliss
And consummation, as the heir of life
Immortal. Quickened by this light upspring

The seeds of holy virtue,—sacred powers
Send out their living fibres through the heart;
Its vast affections feel the kindling breath
Of the creating Spirit, and expand
Beneath his fostering strength. He, as a soul
Within the soul, fills it with vigorous life,
Transforms it by the holy power of love,
Exalts it to a generous liberty
Chartered by highest law, so that it knows
The blessedness of freedom, circumscribed
By one serene and all-embracing Will.
For as the same round sky encompasseth
The earth, and bounds with its blue shining walls
The furthest range of vision, all pure minds
Within that boundless circle breathe the air
Of freedom and of duty;—all their paths
Harmonious are but epicycles traced
In the large orbit of the Will Divine.
Thereunder all immortal natures stand
In stateliness and beauty, each most free,
Yet each most self-surrendered,—each apart
In its own perfectness, while the same type
Moulds and consummates all. As in a wood,
The trees that spring from the same seeds are one
In essence, and yet each, distinct in form,
Unfolds its individual growth and spread

Of branches,—the one type self-multiplied
In infinite variety.
Thus the soul,
By a new life pervaded, calmly grows
Through all its seasons to the glorious flower
Of its perfection. Thus to man are born
The peace, the joy, the bright ethereal hope,
For which he might search nature through and through,
But vainly,—which abide with him through all
The fleeting course and moonlike changefulness
Of Time. Thus suffering, transmuted, grows
The discipline of Faith, and is endued
With purifying virtue from above.
Not from the ground it springs, but down from Heaven
Descends, with power to deepen and to clear
The channels of the heart, too often choked
With growth pernicious, that the stream of life
May have a full and unimpeded flow.
A childlike love to God, now recognized,
In the large effluence of his love to man,
As a most tender Father,—love to Him
Who on the cross shed unpolluted blood
For man's redemption, is the living spring
Of saintly virtue, breathes through all the life
The spirit of a sacrifice,—begets

A love to all that God loves, and to man
As God's. Love is the charm, the exorcism
That casts the spirit of terror from the heart,—
That fear, akin to hate, which slavelike crouched
Before its master's eye, and did him cold
Reluctant service. Where such love abides,
The place is holy,—graces pure and fair,
Like temple-haunting birds, do thither come
As to a finer air, a quiet shrine
Within whose sacred shadows they may dwell
Untroubled. Thus, even now, in higher moods,
Some visitations of a heavenly joy,
Calm festivals of thought, are to the mind
Not unfamiliar. Thus the secret soul
Is conscious of a peace, which the vain world
Can neither give, nor touch, nor take away.
The storms of life may never reach the depth
Where that best gift is treasured,—as the wind,
That raves incessant on the mountain heights,
Ruffles not the clear pool that sunken lies
In their deep hollows. All the waves, which break
Around it, may not overwhelm the heart
That has the steadfast anchor of its hope
Within the veil, nor strain in one weak link
The chain that holds it grappled to the rock
That overbrows Eternity. And Death,

That shrouded, sleepless Phantom, King of Terrors,
Who holds out his dark riddle, hour by hour,
To all time's generations,—armèd Shadow
That haunts our path through every turn of life,
And with a soundless footfall treads behind,
And sends from far a dread presentiment
Across the spirit, and strikes a mortal blow
At earth's securest happiness,—unsolved
And ever-looming Mystery, for whose power
Nature hath no device nor charm of strength,
But only answers us with groan for groan,—
Is here discrowned: upon this holy soil
Draws off his sandal, and awaits a voice,—
Stands disenchanted in the glance of Faith,—
Unvizored of his spectral mask, he stands
Transfigured to an angel, who leads forth
The spirit from its prison, and all the way
Through the dark valley shows it in the mould
The footprints of the Lord of Life, there left
To mark for His redeemed the sacred path
To immortality. Celestial hope!
That shines, ascendant star in gloomy hours,
When some beloved form hath passed away,
Some kindred nature which the heart grew round
And lived in, which on its departure takes
Light from the sky, and gladness from the earth,—

The hope that it has entered into rest
Supernal, joined the saintly company
Who worship day and night, where never sin
Can come, nor pain, nor sorrow, and that soon
We too shall pass the golden gates, and swell
This lofty celebration, and rejoice
With those who went before us in a joy
Ineffable, and pure, and ending never,
Within the City of God.
O would that thou,
Poet of Nature! hadst more deeply felt,
And, having felt, unfolded in thy verse
These fears and struggles, hopes and hallowed joys!
Would thou hadst known that only in this depth
The strong foundations of our inward life
Are laid securely, and the building reared
To its divine completeness! Then thy song
Had been an oracle of higher truth
To man; then nature had not seemed less fair,
Nor elements and forms, which to thy mind
Gave forth their deep significance, become
Silent and charmless. Fuller harmonies
Had rolled therefrom over thy trancèd soul,
And thou, interpreting through them the voice
Of God, imparted to all visible things
A purer consecration. In that light,

More open vision would have been vouchsafed,—
Thy nobler task, to chant to after time,
Not nature's praise, but in sublimer strains
The praise of Him who formed it. For apart
From God thus recognized, and ever kept
In the mind's foreground, the exalted sense
Of outward grace and loveliness, may lead
To the enthronement of the work, in place
Of the great Master-Builder. Man may search
For influences to nurture and refine,
And dream he finds them there, and, thus beguiled,
Resign his being to a passionate love
Of that material beauty, which, with all
Its colours mingling in one gorgeous woof,
Is but the curtain hung before the shrine.
And would that, clear as thine, some other voice
Would lift rebuke against this tendency
Of a too sensuous age,—this overfond
Devotion to the beautiful and fair,
Which would seduce us from the personal God,
To worship some abstraction of the mind,
Clothed in the forms of nature! Men evoke
Some fantasy apparelled in cloudy pomp
Of words,—the Spirit of the Universe,
Or plastic Soul of Nature, or the Power
Of Intellectual Beauty,—and to this,

Their idol, out of dazzling images
And glowing thoughts compacted,—as of old
The desert Apis from the golden rings
And chains of Israel,—they proclaim a feast
Of high inauguration, and, with sound
Of sweetest minstrelsy, they set it up,
And call the world to worship. Let them learn
That nature, though to rarest spirit refined
In their ideal visions, is not God,
But from God,—that her glories, at their height,
Can be no avatar of the Divine,
No incarnation of all-ruling Mind.
Her ministration and her noblest aim
Are then fulfilled when, in her silent signs
And in the language of her face, we read
That He who formed her sits upon a throne
Which spurns divided honours.
Over all
His works let His high attributes of power,
Of majesty, of wisdom, and of grace,
Stand eminent,—like glittering spires that rise
High o'er a city's roofs, and lead the thoughts
To heaven. Thus, to the Greeks, who saw of old
The templed mount of Athens from the gulf,
The point of Pallas' spear, herself unseen,
Gleamed o'er the snowy Parthenon,—a sign

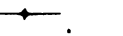
That there, the tutelar goddess kept her watch
Over the festive city.
It were well
That some, whose stately creed reserves no place
For evangelic truths, which to the heart
Of the unlettered peasant evidence
Their heavenly power, and build his being up
In silent sanctity,—some who would spurn,
As the weak dream of fancy, his belief
In the Eternal Spirit who renews
His inward life,—should learn that there may be
A mysticism of reason as of faith.
His thoughts may have a loftier range than theirs,
Who speak as if the self-included mind
By force of meditation could extract
All aids to strengthen, guide, and purify,
From nature,—be, in solitude, transformed
Into the likeness of the images
Of majesty and beauty it beholds.
The striving spirit may be thus upborne
Into some airy region, but can find
No wholesome nurture there,—nor calm confront
Its immortality, nor look through death
With an upholding hope. The mountain peaks
That seem so near to heaven, are cold and bare,—
Dead granite crusted with unfruitful snow.

These were thy haunts, O poet! and, though thou
Didst not leave Him unpraised, a firmer grasp,
A more habitual and presiding sense
Of His pure presence in thy life of thought
And consciousness, had given a sacred glow
And ardour to thy song. Thou then hadst felt
The pulses of thine inmost being beat
With quicker rapture, till thy fervid thoughts,
Power and emotion fused in fiery stream,—
Flowed forth and filled some vaster mould of song.
There was one
Whose name stands high upon his country's roll
Of poets, who, amidst a faithless age,
Stood forward for the honour of his God,—
Fresh be his memory to the ends of time,
The pensive bard of Olney! From the depths
Of an unknown despair he could proclaim
The heavenly hope to which the angels tuned
Their harps at Bethlehem, and, in the woe
Which crushed his gentle spirit, he could taste
An angel's joy to see each wanderer
Returning to that Father's house, whose gates
He deemed were closed on him. Within that heart
There dwelt a love of nature, deep, and true,
And fervent as was thine. To him the sight
Of wood, and sky, and mountain ministered

Pure and perpetual gladness. Yet, through all
Her voices manifold, he only heard
The voice of God; on all her fair domain,
In radiant signature and imagery,
He saw the golden letters of His name,
The name of Love. The common earth to him
Was holy ground, once trodden by the feet
Of One who stooped in human flesh to die,
A Man for man's redemption. In his song
Glowed inspiration as of altar-fire;
His foot had stood on sacred Olivet,
And on his low-bent head the cleansing dews
Of Jordan had been sprinkled.
Nature's voice
To him was not all gladness: he had been
Within the shrine. His ear had caught the sound
Of that mysterious symphony which breathes
Out of creation's heart to mortal woe,—
The under-tone in that undying wail
Wherewith the human generations mourn
Beneath the weight of evil. He had heard
The deepest notes which from the sevenfold pipe
Of Pan come to the spiritual ear,—
The creature groaning, travailing in pain,
As subject unto change, until the day
Of its redemption from the curse of sin

The time has been, when, listening to the high
And rapt discourse of that grey-headed sage
Thy Wanderer, who, in a low estate,
Cherished a thoughtful spirit, and could muse
In ripeness of experience on Man,
And Nature, and Life's changes, I have wished
That some occasion of his roving life
Had led his footsteps southward to the banks
Of Ouse. There he had haply learned some truths,
That had no place in his shrewd worldly-wise
Philosophy, from the poor Cottager,
Who drew her store of wisdom from one book,
The only one she had,—the Book of God.

THOUGHT ON A ROSE.



Behold the marvellous structure of this Rose!
Full blown, immaculate, and in its firm
Compactness an entire and odorous sphere.
Withal so nicely fashioned that each leaf
Is conscious of its individual being;
Each feels the soft wind breathing at its roots,
The gentle sunshine stealing to its heart,
And tingling in its smallest delicate vein,—
A pulse of gladness. Yet such sympathy
Links leaf to leaf through all the little orb,
That, let but one be rent away, and all
Are instantly dissolved. The steadfast bond
Of unity is broken by the wrong;
The fair and violated building crumbles
Into a heap of leaves, one on another,
Piled loosely like the uncemented stones
Of an old temple.
Thus doth Providence
Image the problem of Society.

IMAGINATION.

Not seldom will the sun, when westering slow,
Turn his bright eye upon a fronting train
Of clouds, and from the mists and falling rain
Weave suddenly his broad and gorgeous bow.
The stainless air puts on a purple glow,
The beauteous secresies of light are plain,
And from these stripes the swimming vapours gain
More splendour than the orient skies can show.
Such is Imagination, and the power
Which peoples nature with its glorious dreams,
Which sprinkles everywhere its golden shower,
And to the fine-eyed poet, in what seems
His vacant but his visionary hour,
Tints every cloud with mild auroral gleams.

THE VESPER HOUR.

Era già l'ora, che volge 'l disio
A' naviganti, e intenerisce 'l cuore
Lo dì, ch'han detto a'dolci amici a Dio;

E che lo nuovo peregrin d'amore
Punge, se ode squilla di lontano,
Che paia 'l giorno pianger, che si muore.

DANTE, *Purgat. Cant.* viii.

A ROSY light the eastern sky is steeping,—
The ripple on the sea has died away
To a low murmur,—and the ships are sleeping
Each on its glassy shadow in the bay:
The young moon's golden shell over the hill
Trembles with lustre, and the trees are still.

The air grows clearer, and her amice blue
The gentle Twilight hath about her cast,
And from her silver urn she sprinkles dew:
Silence and Sleep, twin sisters, follow fast
Her soundless sandals, and where'er she goes
Day-wearied nature settles to repose.

Hark! the clear bell from that tall convent-tower
Hath sounded,—and, or e'er its echoes die,
Another chime hath rung the vesper hour,—
A farther and a fainter makes reply;
Till far and near the soft appeal to prayer
With music fills the undulating air.

Ye sweet-voiced bells, ring on! Though at your call
I may not breathe in prayer a creature's name,
Yet on my heart more touching memories fall,
And ye remind me of a holier claim,—
His, whose undrooping eye alone can keep
Watch over His belovèd as they sleep.

MOONLIGHT.

How fair are now the heavenly places!
How lovely in their purity they are!—
The moon is wandering up their azure spaces,
Companioned by a single peerless star.

The hills are still and clear; the brightness
Slants downward, tremulous, upon the trees;
One cloud,—a snowy island,—sees its whiteness
Shining beneath it in the charmèd seas.

O Beauty, sweet and spirit-thrilling!
Thy temple is the star-blue air of night;
Else why this trance of nature,—this fulfilling
Of tranquil thought, and mystery of delight!

A luminous element of gladness
Now vaults our sphere of being, welkin-wise;
And should a thought be born akin to sadness,
It cloud-like takes its colour from its skies.

As light doth fill the crystal chalice
Of air, the Beautiful the soul doth fill;
This is the spell that opens nature's palace,
And makes us free to wander where we will.

Peace has her dwelling in the borders
Of night,—all turbulence dies with the day;
Her eye has power to soothe the mind's disorders,
And all its tides heave gentlier at her sway.

If we could only keep and cherish
Such thoughts as then assuage our inward strife!
But soon, how soon! the fairest visions perish
Before the rough realities of life.

With the refining sense of beauty
No power to purify the heart is given,—
This dwells apart with Faith, which hallows duty,
And treads Time's highway with its eye on Heaven.

A NIGHT-REVERIE.

THE spirit of the starry hour
  Has tranced the silent skies,—
Upon the glimmering convent-tower
  The dreamy moonshine lies.
A thin, blue haze of crystal air
  Is quivering on the sea;
And odorous blooms are faint whene'er
  The weak wind stirs the tree.

And Memory now begins to hold
  Her nightly festival,
And brightens many a picture old,
  Half-faded on the wall.
And hark! she singeth low and sweet
  The once familiar lays,
And leadeth back the toil-worn feet
  To long-untrodden ways.

By no imperious power pursued,
To which we yield at last,
But by a gentle impulse wooed,
We wander through the past.
The heart floats onward with the tide
Of thought,—a willing thrall;
And shadowy forms at distance glide,
And long-lost voices call.

It mingles with the holy calm
Of nature; rapt afar,
It hears the everlasting psalm
That star repeats to star.
Withdrawn into profound retreats,
The world no more we see,
And only hear the pulse which beats
Across Eternity.

LINES TO A STAR.

Rise, little star!
O'er the dusky hill,—
See the bright course open
Thou hast to fulfil.

Climb, little star!
Higher still and higher,
With a silent swiftness,
And a pulse of fire.

Stand, little star!
On the peak of Heaven;
But for one brief moment
Is the triumph given.

Sink, little star!
Yet make Heaven bright,
While thou slowly sinkest,
With thy gentle light.

Set, little star!
Gladly fade and die,
With the blush of morning
Coming up the sky.

Each little star
Crieth, "Life, O man!
Should have one clear purpose
Shining round its span."

LINES—ALEXANDER WEEPING.

WHAT! no more worlds to conquer? Weep no more,—
Look inward, and thy heart will show thee one:
Or doubly weep, thy folly to deplore,
That this first conquest is not yet begun!

THE FLOWER AND OAK-SHOOT.

I.

THE genial winds of early May
Were breathing through the wood,
When, sauntering on my wonted way,
In meditative mood,
I saw a Flower which lifted up
Beneath a bank its azure cup,
New opened to the warm blue sky;
Its beauty touched me as I passed,
I stood awhile and on it cast
A calm, regardful eye.

II.

Hard by, the twin leaves of a Plant
Had cleft the dewy mould,—
No charm of colour to enchant
Had they, no grace to hold
In mild arrest the passing foot,
Which might have crushed the tender shoot,

Unconscious of its presence there;
So, with no further note, my gaze
I fixed in mute admiring praise
On its companion fair.

III.

The Flower then, vaunting of its bloom,
Thus to its neighbour cried,—
"And durst thou, sluggish herb, presume
To flourish at my side?
'Tis but a week since I was sown
By April winds, and I have grown
To perfect loveliness, while thou,
Here lying all the winter through,
These common leaves, with much ado,
Hast barely opened now!"

IV.

"Yes! in a week thy beauty grew,"
The Plant thus made reply,
"And in a week 'twill wither, too,
And thou, vain upstart! die.
But I, in this mine infant hour,
Painfully struggling with the power
Of adverse elements, shall stand
Stately and strong in after years,

When thou, and all thy flaunting peers
Have vanished from the land.

V.

"Faith in my native nobleness
Sustains my fragile form,
And keeps me hopeful in the stress
Of rain, and wind, and storm;
And why shouldst thou thy beauty praise,
The fantasy of summer days?—
The sun will spoil it at a stroke;
But ages yet my course remains,
And royal blood is in my veins,
For am not I the Oak?"

VI.

"Honour and reverence to thee!"
I cried in ardent mood,
"True scion of the royalty
Of the umbrageous wood!
The rule of all the forest trees
Is thine; thy lofty destinies
Nerve thee in this thy tender time;
And ministries of wind and air
Will discipline thy youth to wear
The glories of thy prime!

VII.

"A thousand summers thou shalt raise
Aloft thy placid state;
And on thee, in thy latest days,
Will admiration wait.
In peace thou shalt uplift afar
The banner of the land; in war
The bearer of her thunders be,—
And as thou didst command the wood,
Then, with thy primal strength renewed,
Thou shalt command the sea!"

A BIRD'S CHRISTMAS CAROL.

WHEN Spring round yonder lime-tree bare
Its tent of silken leafage flung,
A homeless bird found shelter there,
And in the green seclusion sung.

On dewy dawns and rose-red eves,
In sun and shower,—the Summer long,
That little voice, amid the leaves,
Sent up its jet of silver song.

And when the Autumn woodland wore
The crimson flush of slow decay,
It warbled sweetly as before,
Nor faltered all the waning day.

Two wrinkled leaves upon the lime
Now mourn their kindred in the mould,
Their summer-guest comes many a time,
And cheers them with a song of old.

Methinks a pensive undertone
Now trembles through the blither strain,
A memory of the summer gone,—
A wish for summer back again.

Of such remembrance Hope is born,
And through that music floats a chime
Of echoes from the April morn,
And whispers of the primrose time.

THE PETREL.

" Are ye not much better than they?"—St. Matthew vi. 26.

Far out at sea, and slowly borne
To lands beneath a southern sky,
A vision came of years gone by,
And thoughts that haunt a heart forlorn.

As if my life had been a dream,
And I, with aimless course and blank,
A weak weed, loosened from the bank,
And idly drifting down the stream.

As if there were no loving eye
To guide my feet, and watch my ways,
And I, chance-wandering through a maze,
Might unregarded live and die.

Behind me, I could only mark
  The hopes and pleasures I had lost;
  Before me, like an unknown coast,
The Future loomed through vapours dark.

A troubled mood not free from sin,
  A murmuring at the will of God,
  A voice that cried against the rod
From an unhumbled heart within.

But so I mused, when near the ship
  It chanced a lonely sea-bird flew,—
  Low-hovering o'er the waters blue
It curved with frequent downward dip.

Long time I watched its wavering flight,—
  Hither and thither o'er the sea
  It skimmed, as if each movement free
Followed an impulse of delight.

No other living thing did move
  In that wide circle's desert bound,—
  The bleak sea heaving all around,
The dim dome arching vague above.

And then I thought,—"That little bird
Hath its loved haunt at close of day,
In some green island far away,
Or rock or reef which breakers gird.

"And not unguided doth it roam,—
One eye its every wandering knows;
And in its heart an instinct glows
That guides it to its distant home.

"It hath no skill to sow nor reap,
Yet for its daily want He cares,
And its convenient food prepares
In the salt furrows of the deep.

"And wherefore doubt, O fearful heart!
As if, through all thy wanderings wide,
He will not be thy faithful guide,
And act a loving Father's part?

"Set not thy will with His at strife,—
The water of the bitterest cup
May be a fountain springing up
Hereafter to eternal life."

I heard the mild admonishment,
The echo of that voice of power
Which on the Mount made every flower
And bird a preacher of content.

And straightway the remembrance bred
Within me hope and holy trust,—
My spirit rose out of the dust,
And worshipped, and was comforted.

SEQUEL TO THE FOREGOING.

"The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."—JEREMIAH viii. 7.

YET, Lord, what is it but Thy grace,
Enclosing us in its bright round,
Which tells us men that we have found
In thy regard a higher place

Than creatures of the air which wait,
In meek and simple quietness,
Upon Thy will, and ne'er transgress
The limits of their ancient state?

They never strain the genial band
Which round about them Thou hast cast,—
They keep an even course, and fast
Within their several orders stand.

Sin has not stung them with despair,—
  They breathe a free and painless breath;
  Nor on their joy have fears of death
Shut down a rigid weight of care.

Fair Nature has no chilling glooms
  For them,—the wards of Providence,
  They wander on without offence,
And sing through all their Father's rooms.

The gentle guidance of Thy will,
  Within their measure, is their choice;
  And they are glad,—for they rejoice
Its light conditions to fulfil.

Wooed by the ruffling airs of spring,
  The stork forsakes her Syrian clime,
  And, true to her appointed time,
Cleaves the blue air with nimble wing,

To lands where Gothic minsters tear
  With spears of stone the trailing cloud,
  And marble statues o'er the crowd
Look steadfast in the sultry square.

There, spring by spring, she harbour finds
  In fretted niche, or moulding quaint;
  Or, at the feet of sculptured saint,
Is shielded from the shifting winds.

Thus, ever in the season sweet
  Of blowing flowers and budding leaves,
  The swallow twitters from the eaves,
Or skims the sunny village street.

And troops of cranes in serried ranks
  Move creaking on across the sky,
  And long arrest the peasant's eye
Upon some river's viny banks.

All come and go at Thy command,
  They find it joy enough to wait,
  In their low station, at Thy gate,
For the dumb signals of Thy hand.

But we, who, placed beneath the sway
  Of conscience, can discern both good
  And evil,—in whose richer blood
Immortal spirit beats alway,—

Whose being wears the golden crown
  Of reason, and whose free-born mind
  Was made its perfectness to find
In perfect concord with Thine own,—

Are in revolt against Thy law,
  And overstep its sacred bar,
  And from our Father's house afar
In wicked pride of heart withdraw.

We men, so far above them set,
  Consume our years in fruitless toils,
  And fret and struggle in the coils
Of vain desire as in a net.

And what but Love has watched our course,
  And out of blessings forged a chain
  To win us back to Thee again,
With tender and prevailing force?—

Which, with strong arms around us cast,
  Would lead us higher than before,
  That we may love Thee more and more,
And hold Thy good commandments fast;—

Which gives us, in its heavenly might,
  Strength to endeavour and endure,
  After Thy pureness makes us pure,
Enlightens us with Thy great light,—

And in Thy freedom makes us free,—
  That we may walk erect within
  Thy conscious presence, and begin
To find our endless rest in Thee.

TIMOLEON.

A GREEK STORY OF PROVIDENCE.

(FROM PLUTARCH.)

THE moon on Corinth's temples shone,
When from the bay, Timoleon,
Thy galleys with a favouring breeze
Bore out into the silent seas.
From mole and rampart rose the prayer
That Heaven upon your course might smile,
For freedom is the boon you bear
To Sicily's long-ravaged isle.

The people watch the ships, and tell
The omen which of late befell:
How when, within the Delphic shrine,
He prayed for some auspicious sign,
A sacred wreath,—some conqueror's crown,
The pledge of an accomplished vow,—
From the high temple-roof fell down,
And rested on Timoleon's brow.

"And thus," they cry, "Apollo leads
Our captain crowned to lofty deeds;
He leads him on, and sends the gale
That murmurs softly in the sail."
They said, and sudden through the sky
A pale, unearthly radiance streamed,—
A mystic light, to every eye,
Upon the foremost galley gleamed.

It narrowed to a steadier glare,
Then, meteor-like, it clove the air,—
Clear as the torch the vested priest
Waves in Eleusis at the feast.
Before the ship it glided bright,
The ship behind it followed free;—
Heaven hung that cresset on the night
To guide their path across the sea.

They saw it, and their hearts were cheered,
And by the luminous sign they steered,—
Till, ranked on the Sicilian strand,
They shouted freedom o'er the land.
The people rose in strength sublime,
In fragments fell the oppressor's chain;
The glories of the ancient time
Revived for Sicily again.

Her children blessed Timoleon's name,
City to city spoke his fame:
The golden fruits of his success
He reaped in joy and quietness.
Yet vows of deadly hate were breathed
Against the great deliverer's life,
And tyranny her falchion sheathed
To grasp by stealth the assassin's knife.

In Etna's shadow lies a town
Where stood a temple of renown,—
The ground was holy, every tree
Was clothèd round with sanctity.
Here, after war, Timoleon dwelt;
Here, with a simple heart and pure,
He laid aside his state, and felt
The freedom of a mind secure.

Unarmed, ungirt with guards, he moved
Among the people whom he loved;
Serene in virtue's generous trust,
He bared his breast to treason's thrust:
For power in innocence abides
To bear it on through snares unharmed,
And the firm soul that conscience guides
With mail of proof is always armed.

Hired to do the deed of shame,
Two strangers to the city came;
A festival is near,—a time
That yields occasion for the crime;
Timoleon to the temple goes,
  By sacrifice his vows to pay,
And, in the solemn rite, his foes
  Their nobler victim swear to slay.

Slow-stepping o'er the sacred ground,
The victim comes with garlands crowned,—
The white-robed boys the hymn begin,
Pipe, flute, and cymbal chiming in.
They sing of Providence that guards
  The good by secret-working power,
And righteous doom to guilt awards
  When strikes the inevitable hour.

And they were there,—the hymn they heard,
Yet no relenting thoughts were stirred,—
They brace their hearts to hardy guilt,
Their hands are on the poniard's hilt.
Slow through the crowd, in crafty guise,
  They wind like vipers through the grass,—
Their bloody thoughts watch from their eyes,
  And silent signs between them pass.

Behind him now, a longer breath
They draw against the act of death,—
One moment, and a caitiff's knife
Makes havock of a noble life,
When, swift as light, an arm concealed
  Has cloven the one with ghastly wound,—
Hard by Timoleon's feet he reeled,
  And sank in death upon the ground.

A shout of horror, angry cries
Of vengeance, from the crowd arise,—
While from the temple, with the red
And reeking sword, the avenger fled
Toward a neighbouring rocky height:
  The fellow-ruffian from his place
Rushed to the altar, pale with fright,
  And clasped its ledge, and sued for grace.

"But spare my life," the wretch besought,
"And I will open all the plot."
The promise given: "This man," he said,
"Who here before you lieth dead,
Had joined me in a wicked vow
  Timoleon's blood this day to spill.
What hand has dealt the avenging blow
  I know not,—Heaven has done its will!"

Loud shouts are heard,—a gathering sound
Proclaims the fugitive is found;
The crowd comes thronging through the door,—
The bloody weapon borne before,—
And round by armèd men beset,
A youth comes on with tranquil pace;
He sees his victim at his feet,
But not a change is on his face.

Timoleon waves his hand, and stills
The tumult that the temple fills,—
All stand as in the hush of death.
"Now, in the eye of Heaven," he saith,
"And over this pale corse, declare
Why he was slaughtered where he stood;
Look on him, as he lieth there,—
Make answer to the cry of blood!"

"I hear the cry, and will reveal
That which shall stifle its appeal.
Listen and ponder, every one,
What by my hand just Heaven hath done.
Against the wretch, whose life I spilt,
More righteous blood has long complained;
His soul was black with damning guilt,
His hands my father's murder stained.

"No grace was shown to hoary hairs,
That heart was steeled against his prayers,—
Leontium of his crime still keeps
The record. Long I tracked his steps,
And long my restless hopes were crushed;
But here, when first I saw him stand,
The image of my father rushed
Upon my heart, and nerved my hand!"

Some voices cried, "We know the youth,
And vouch that what he tells is truth."
Timoleon heard him, and approved,
And deeply was his spirit moved:
Heaven's secret work he saw revealed,
That Providence which sets the time,
And in a moment turns its shield
On virtue, and its sword on crime.

Deep is the judgment which conceals
The working of its mystic wheels,
But Wisdom guides them in their grooves,
A pulse of life within them moves.
They roll in circuits vast and dim,
Their springs are noiseless and unknown;
But, swift or slow, they toil for Him
Who on the ages builds His throne.

STRATONICE.

SHRILL the trumpet blew at evening underneath the castle-wall,
Forth on the lofty rampart came a lady at the call;
She was fair and very stately, jewels glittered on her brow,
And she looked with anxious glances on the armèd host below;
On the laurelled arms and eagles, which had caught the slanting gleam,
And the close blue spears of warriors winding far-off like a stream.
In the van rode the proud Consul, his short falchion by his knee,
And he looked up to the rampart with a graceful courtesy:
"We have fought a bloody battle, and the king, thy lord, is fled,—
On his track are many foemen for the price upon his head!"

She heard out the dismal tidings, but she answered
not a word,
Though her long dark eyelash quivered at the mention
of her lord.
Then she thought of days departed, and her father old
and lone,
For she was a minstrel's daughter, and a lowly lot had
known;
Through the fair Ionian hamlets his companion she
had been,
Till she sang before the monarch, and he took her for
his queen.
But happier was the minstrel than the prince's jewelled
bride,
And she felt in that sad moment all the emptiness of
pride.
To her lips the draught of pleasure she had never
lifted up,
Had she known there lurked such poison at the bottom
of the cup.

ATTILA AT AQUILEIA.

Oft, Aquileia! from thy towers
Hast thou beheld the foe
Around thy ramparts close his powers,
And bid his clarions blow;
But ne'er did fiercer foes advance
Against thee, nor a direr chance
Thy chequered fortunes e'er befall,
Than when the swarming Orient hordes
Of Attila unsheathed their swords
Around thy leagured wall.

Yet high thine ancient courage swelled
In danger's evil day,
Long thine undaunted burghers quelled
The pride of that array;
And oft in battle's stormy shock,
Like waves recoiling from the rock,

Their legions from thy gates were driven;
For still when freedom sounds alarm,
The strength that nerves the patriot's arm
Is strength supplied by Heaven.

But Famine came and Plague behind,
Two old and sworn allies,
And many a child and mother pined
Before the father's eyes;
Still, starting at the trumpet's call,
The ready burghers thronged the wall,
In their heroic manhood mailed;
Along the battlements they stand,
With hollow eye and shrunken hand,
But heart that never quailed.

And now the third autumnal moon
Shone sickly in its wane,
Since first his tents the haughty Hun
Had pitched upon the plain:
His soaring hopes are sunken low,
And quenched his valour's earlier glow,
Which kindled at the clash of lance;
And many a voice is quick to blame
The leader who has staked his fame
Upon a desperate chance.

What fierce tumultuous struggle now
Convulsed that chieftain's soul,—
The shame upon his swarthy brow
Glowed crimson as a coal;
And sleep forsook his eyes until
He bent to fate his iron will,
And bade his soldiers, when the sound
Of trump was heard at break of day,
Strike tents and march in war-array
From that ill-omened ground.

The westering sun more softly glowed
Through skies of tender blue,
When forth the gloomy chieftain rode,
To take a farewell view
Of walls so long assailed in vain;
His bravest captains in his train
Rode sharing in their prince's grief,
The camp was silent as they passed,
And from their tents the warriors cast
Sad glances on their chief.

The mournful company rode on,
Struck dumb by adverse fate,
Until they reached a bastion
That flanked a postern-gate.

Here, on a mossy ledge that round
The buttress ran, a stork had found
  Fit station for her yearly nest,—
Secure in the old faith that stirred
All hearts to love the trustful bird
  As man's peculiar guest.

It seemed as if some sudden thought,
  On that fair eve, had come
Into her heart to leave the spot
  Long chosen for her home,
Through those calm skies to steer in quest
Of some untroubled place of rest;
  Aloft she soared with plaintive cry,—
Her nestlings followed at her scream,
And soon all faded like a dream
  Far up the sunbright sky.

The chieftain, pausing, watched their flight,
  "Behold, ye Huns!" he cried,
His dark eye flashing with the light
  Of its imperious pride;
"Behold the omen Heaven hath sent
To shame our cowardly intent:
  The stork, so faithful to her home,

At last forsakes it, for some power
Divine hath warned her that the hour
Of overthrow hath come!"

The captains caught their leader's fire,
As they had shared his shame,
From heart to heart leaps ever higher
The quick contagious flame;
From tent to tent the tidings glance,
And every warrior grasps his lance,
And shouts, "Unto the walls again!
Our ancient honour, tarnished long,
Appeals for vengeance of the wrong,
And cleansing from the stain!"

At early dawn, when o'er the hill
The first light faintly blushed,
The clarion shrieked alarum shrill,
And forth their squadrons rushed
Toward that fated bastion,
From which the boding bird had flown.
That parting scream still seems to sound,—
The voice of doom, from Heaven it falls:
"The way through these devoted walls
Must here, ye Huns! be found."

Nor flinched the burghers, tried so long,
In that disastrous hour,—
Through blank and grassy streets they throng
To man the leaguered tower,
For altar and for hearth they stood,
Pledged each to shed his patriot blood;
And well did each redeem the pledge,
Till, in the furious surge that breaks
Upon its base, the bastion shakes
Beneath the ominous ledge.

The stones are loosened in its side,
The smoke obscures the sun,
And ragged portals open wide,—
The breach is stormed and won.
Down from the steep the foemen poured,
And each barbarian's bloody sword
Took vengeance fearfully and well,
Until the last of that brave band
Died, wound in front, and sword in hand;—
Thus Aquileia fell!

MOHAMMED AT DAMASCUS.

"The district of Damascus is the best watered and most pleasant of all Syria. The Arabs term it one of the four paradises of the East, and relate that Mohammed, as he viewed from an eminence the splendour of the city of which he wished to take possession, hesitated to enter it, because he knew that man can enjoy only one paradise, and he had resolved that his should not be in the earth. The three other paradises are the valley of Bawan, the river Obollah, and Sogd, near Samarcand."—ROSENMÜLLER,—*Geography of Central Asia.*

On the hill above Damascus stands the prophet, and looks down
On the blooming groves and gardens that embower the pleasant town.

Level on each tower and temple lies the mellow evening light,—
Brazen domes and marble columns, tipped with crosses, flashing bright.

Mingling chimes float softly upwards through the air
in cadence sweet;
On the ear the city voices in one hollow murmur beat.

Near him stand his turbaned Moslems, each with
scymitar and lance,
Raised to rush upon the city when the prophet signs
advance.

Ali's foam-flecked horse snorts loudly, champs the bit,
and curves his ear;
And his master cries—"O prophet! wherefore stand
we gazing here?

"Allah, of a truth, abandons this fair town into our hands;
"And for us its fame and glory have gone forth through
all the lands.

"Every sword but waits thy signal, and as soon as it
is given,
"Islam holds the loveliest city on which laughs the
light of Heaven!"

"Nay, my son!" the prophet answered, "had He
willed we should go there,
"Never to his children's glances would the place have
seemed so fair.

"He hath said that for His chosen blooms no paradise but one,—
"In a sphere beyond the courses of our earthly stars and sun.

"Unto those who look no higher may these happy seats be given;
"But let all the true believers seek their heritage in Heaven!"

THE PRINCE AND THE WIDOW.

Do some justice unto Islam, though the prophet you disown,
There are truths even in the Koran,—fossils bedded in the stone.
In the old Arabian legends there may still be clearly seen
Praise of virtue, sense of honour, often delicate and keen.
Many a Cadi has unravelled, with a subtile glance of wit,
Some entangled skein of falsehood which a perjurer had knit;
Often has the Moollah pleaded for the weak against the strong,—
The Averter of the evil, or Avenger of the wrong;
There has often been true dealing in the Oriental gate,
Which some ermined Christian judges might do well to imitate;

ıere the balance has been steady, there the sword has had an edge.
ıd the Vizier feared the Dervish who sate begging by his hedge.

. . . . . .

hen the Cross in Spain was broken, and the Moors her sceptre swayed,
his royal town a Caliph a fair stately palace made;
easant was the wide-arched mansion, with its quaintly-figured walls,
ıd the silver-sprinkling fountains in its marble-paven halls,
:abesques filled every chamber with a wild fantastic grace,
ıd the Koran's golden ciphers made a mystery of the place;
ch the tracery of each lattice, carven sharp with master-craft,
ıd the mouldings wrought like lace-work on each tall and slender shaft.
ıdden glimpses of trees waving, with a freshness to the eye,
ıme through pillared courts all open to the soft blue summer sky;
ıd around it were sweet gardens, sunny clumps of scented bloom,

Dusky umbrage, shadowing alleys with a cool delicious gloom.
Near the palace a poor Widow had a small paternal field,
Where the Prince a fair pavilion for his pleasure wished to build,—
Only this one charm was wanting to complete all to his heart,—
But no bribe could tempt the widow with her little plot to part.
Wearied with his vain entreaties, he at last put forth his hand,
And raised up his dome of pleasure on the violated land.
Weak and friendless was the widow,—her oppressor proud and strong,—
But she went before the Cadi, and bore witness to the wrong.
On a day the Prince was walking in the garden planted there,
With a joyous heart beholding his pavilion shining fair,
The old Cadi then came kneeling, and implored, in lowly mood,
Leave to fill a sack beside him from the soil on which they stood.

It was granted, and he filled it; then the old man, turning round,
Asked the Caliph to assist him while he raised it from the ground.
Smiled the Prince at the entreaty, thinking all was done in mirth,
Raised the sack, but dropped full quickly his strange burden to the earth.
"It is heavy," said the Cadi, "and thou canst not bear the weight;
Yet, 'tis but a little portion of the widow's whole estate.
"Side by side with that poor widow must thou stand, at Allah's bar;
"And in that majestic presence, prince and beggar equal are.
"And if thou, O Prince! art burdened with a load of earth so small,
"What wilt thou then answer Allah, when he charges thee with all?"

The sharp arrow reached his conscience, and atoning for his guilt,
Like a king, he gave the widow the pavilion he had built.

BAALBEK.

Upon the lowest slope of that steep ridge
Which strides across all Syria, and confronts
The stately length of Lebanon, where the gorge
Of a deep valley opens on the plain,
A city stands, built in the ancient time
By Solomon. The wandering Arab tells
How crowds of workmen startled the dull waste
With clamour, and the sound of axes rung
Far on the wind, as temple, wall, and tower
Rose, not without unearthly help, compelled
By sigil and relentless talisman,
Till all was ended, and the snowy gleam
Of marble brightened the grey wilderness.

Into its wealthy marts the East long poured
Her frankincense, and gold, and ivory,
And sweet crassated gums. Here haughty Rome
Sank vanquished on his captive's breast, and slept
Away his manhood in voluptuous dreams.
Long strings of loaded camels slowly passed

Along the encumbered ways. At these choked wells
The dusky Indian and the blue-eyed Gaul
Knelt side by side and drank. And pilgrims came
From the far shadow of the Pyramids
To worship here, and pass with dazzled eyes
Through pillared vestibules within the fane
Which hallowed the fair City of the Sun!

As like a glittering vision it arose,
And beautified the solitary place,
Like one it faded. Thus, in the hot waste,
Through palpitating haze, the traveller sees
Dome, battlement, and golden temple tall,
The phantasm of a shining city, flush,
And as he gazes, vanish.
The wide courts
Echo no voice nor footfall; the wild wind,
That ruin-haunting minstrel, sobs and wails
Upon his fitful pipe. No more at morn
The millstone cheerily murmurs, nor at eve,
While the rich saffron light of sunset ebbs,
And stars assemble up the rosy air,
Are lamps seen twinkling through the lattices.
In the white light the pillars cast their slant,
Fantastic shadows, chequered as they lean,
Or lie upreared in precious wreck along

The parching soil. The small acanthus twines
Around its chiselled foliage on the crown
Of fluted columns. The dry wind-sown weed
Hath split the morticed friezes, that still cut
The blue air with their sharp and delicate edge,
And on the triglyph, fallen in the shade,
The oleander sheds its crimson flowers.

Time his pale daughter Silence, by the hand,
Hath led into the shrine. In the dim light,
That through a crevice flecks the deep recess,
You see the virgin on a pedestal
Unmoving sit, her veil half o'er her brow,
Still gazing outwards with a listless eye,
And pressing one thin finger on her lip.
O Isis, and O Horus! honoured long
In antique Memphis, where the Nile flows dark
Under the temples, and in after time
Here worshipped, whither are ye fled? Within
These roofless courts, whose carven niches stand
So richly fretted by immortal art,
But vacant of their gods, we yet may trace
Your monogram engraven in porphyry
Or bronze,—the wingèd orb, clasped in the coils
Of serpents. But the symbol has outlived
The faith. A cipher to earth's earlier race,

With deepest mystery fraught,—a sacred type
That shadowed the eternal,—it remains,
When the old faith has mouldered whence it sprung,
A link between the dead world and our own,—
A fragment washed upon the beach of Time
From the great shipwreck of a foundered creed.

And yet the pulse of life still feebly beats
Under the shroud of Death,—a low small sound
That stirs him not, but murmurs in his ear,
And soothes it with the memory of the pride
Which he hath so abased. These tottering mosques,
With their low domes and slender minarets,
From which the old Muezzin shrilly calls
To prayer,—these huts of dark-red stone,
Built like the swallow's nest in shady coignes
Of palaces and temples,—and the voice
Of women drawing water at the well,
Still speak of life, but empty and forlorn,—
Such life as makes decay more desolate.
Less sad it is to view these lonely forms
And relics of the Past, when nought recalls
Man's presence to the mind, when all is still
As in some low-browed catacomb. Go forth,
And stand within its porches when the heat
Of sultry noon has burned the languid wind

Out of the air, and as you look upon
The beauty and magnificence of old,
Silence will take unto itself a voice.
The lizard rustling in the stones, the unseen
Cicala chirping shrill, the small green snake
That basks upon the sand, or glances quick
From some cool chink beneath a levelled shaft,—
Each sound and sight of nature, and the life
Its little generations lead amidst
The buried pride of man, move the deep heart
To sadness, charged with monitory thought.
We listen to the voice which tells in tones,
Pensive yet not unpleasing, of the course
Of life and death, corruption and decay,—
The inevitable necessity and law
Which binds all things that live and are beneath
The courses of the stars.
And such may seem
The burden of the restless stream that winds
Through all the rich-strewn solitude, and steeps
The roots of fragrant thickets on its banks,
And golden-fruited trees. High over head,
Above the dark inwoven umbrage, drawn
Around the crumbling city like a screen,
The temple, on its massive platform, stands
Poised in transparent air.

Its giant-group
Of columns rise, unstooping and unworn,
The hoary watch-towers of the wilderness.
A charm of immemorial grandeur clings
Around its lofty station, as apart,
And high uplifted o'er the abodes of men,
It stands serene, unchangeable, august,
As Faith stands over Time. Erect amid
Confusion and decay, it seems to wear
A majesty and beauty not of earth,
And to the musing mind may even appear
A type of that ethereal Temple built
Of lucid adamant, whose radiant walls
The uncoiling cycles shake not,—whose clear vault
No vapours of our earthly atmosphere,
No creeping shadow of our earthly night,
Nor fleeting mist, can stain.
Around is waste,
And change, and vanity,—the things above
Endure, and are eternal. The same sun
Shines on these marble architraves, the stars
Look down as brightly on the wreck of time
As on its unsoiled glory. Still undimmed,
Through these aërial pillars gleams the sky,
And over them are the unmouldering snows
That plume the regal crest of Lebanon.

THE RUINED CHAPEL.

NOSSA SENHORA D'A ESPERANÇA.

The same hills stand around it, and it lends
A beauty to the spot it graced of yore;
The old winds haunt it still; each season bends
The light and shadow round it as before;
But Time hath swathed it in his garb of grey;
It feels the load of years, and slowly wastes away.

How many suns have gone up that fair sky,
Since first its builders reared it, stone by stone!
How oft has midnight, with her star-blue eye,
Beheld it in the valley dim and lone!
Age has erased its date, and it appears
To grey-haired men the same as in their childish years.

Yet what they heard in childhood still they tell:
How in the ancient time a shepherd found
An image of the Virgin, by a well
That gurgled up within this narrow bound,

How this to mystic auguries gave scope,
Until a chapel rose,—Our Lady's Shrine of Hope.

Then rung the small bell at the dawn of day,
And duly as the waning light was pale
Upon the peaks, its chimes were borne away
In mellowing cadences far up the vale:
The goatherd heard it on the uplands bare,
And crossed his swarthy brow, and said his evening prayer.

And down these mountain paths, when Sabbath rest
Was on the valleys, worshippers were seen
Thronging obedient to the mild behest,
Or on the ways that wind through chestnuts green.
And if with erring rites they bent the knee,
Be theirs the guilt who sealed the Word that should be free.

But Time's bell rung a dirge, and now have ceased
The chant sonorous—the exulting hymn;
Fallen is the altar where the vested priest,
While lights through steaming incense glimmered dim,
To act the dread Atonement fondly strove,
As if the cross were vain, and Calvary's dying love!

The wild weeds rustle on the arches tall,
The wind-sown grass springs rank upon the floor.
The restless bramble muffles court and wall,
And nets its thorny curtain in the door,
And moss-stained stones, sunk deep into the mould,
Have here, since first they fell, had leisure to grow old.

Yet, ancient pile! the elements that waste
Deal gently, for they soften and atone,—
A milder beauty they have round thee cast,—
With richer tints have crusted every stone:
It is a silent power that Time employs,
Which veils his certain end, and decks what he destroys.

Therefore thou enviest not the leafy trees
Nor the old hills, which, with a steadfast eye,
Confront time's lifted scythe through centuries,
Knowing that when they perish, he must die:
Since out of this slow waste a pensive grace
Has grown, which beautifies the solitary place.

For all decay tends ever towards peace;
Deep at its heart lives silence, and the rest
Which nature by continual ministries
Breathes to us out of her maternal breast;

And here the same sweet influence soothes and thrills
My spirit, as among the lonely woods and hills.

The white-towered city far below me lies,
Beyond it spreads the calm, blue Libyan Sea:
And on the furthest limit of the skies,
A long, low, purple cloud hangs hazily,
That seems, thus dim with light, a summer isle,
For which Heaven's festive face doth ever keep a smile.

But when on all earth's beauty shall there be
A consecration? when shall promised days
With light unwaning brighten land and sea?
Even here, as through the future time I gaze,
A hopeful omen rises in my heart,
A vision cheers the way by which I now depart.

Decaying as thou art, thou may'st still stand
To hear the sound of Christian psalms once more,
To see a purer faith exalt the land,
A holier ministration than before;
Thus, by a blessing to thy youth denied,
Thy latest age may be serenely glorified.

LINES WRITTEN IN A FRANCISCAN CONVENT.

How oft from this small casement high,
When chanted was the vesper-psalm,
The lonely monk has raised his eye
Toward that heaven so pure and calm,
And watched the moonlight showering pale
Upon the church and trees below,
And heard the soft and wandering wail
Of waters in perpetual flow!

One looked, but sight so beautiful
Awoke no answering thrill in him;
And, with a heart benumbed and dull,
He saw as if his eye were dim.
No charm to him, no solemn sound,
Had waves, or winds, or clouds, or stars,—
His range of thought the cloister bound,
And in his soul he wore its bars.

Perchance, some mind of finer mould
Has gazed up that clear, starry air,
And seen the golden gates unfold,
And wings of angels waving fair,—
In trance beheld the Virgin nigh,
Heard voices sweet and heavenly sounds,—
While, smiling on his votary,
St. Francis showed his mystic wounds.

One, with a heart of slumbering power,
Once scathed by passion's fiery glow,
May here have stood, and blessed the hour
His lips pronounced the awful vow.
From envy, pride, and care, release
He may have found in cloistered walls,
And fancied he had grasped the peace
That is no guest in pleasure's halls.

How many felt, through blighted years,
The writhing pangs of inward strife,
And mourned with unavailing tears
The error which had poisoned life,—
The bondage of a vow at war
With nature frenzied by control,
As if the cord * and scapular
Could chain the fiends that haunt the soul!

* The cord is the distinguishing badge of the Order of St. Francis.

Their minds roamed sadly through the past
To youth, with hope's bright fancies flushed,
Ere clouds the prospect overcast,
Ere care life's opening blossom crushed;
Then weary days and nights forlorn,
The struggling mind, the sickening heart,
Till, in the conflict overborne,
All earthly ties they rent apart.

They sought the fenced, the holy ground,—
Behind them died the world's vain din,—
But soon, alas! too soon, they found
That they had brought the world within.
Beyond its outward range they passed,
And vainly hoped its power to foil;
Out from the heart the world to cast,—
This was the duty, this the toil.

So Jerome through the streets of Rome
Could wander with undazzled eyes,
In lordly mansions seek no home,
And all its pomp and pride despise;
But in the wilds, the singing bird
Brought back Rome's voice on every wind,
And every leaf, that idly stirred,
The thought of friends left far behind.

Some died in hoary age, some young,
Their hearts grief-cankered at the core,—
And bells were rung, and psalms were sung,
When opened was the chancel floor;
They moulder there, that ghastly band,—
Their shadows glimmer through the gloom,—
And I, a stranger in the land,
Muse mournfully above their tomb.

THE JARDIM DE SERRA:

(THE GARDEN OF THE MOUNTAINS.)

SWEET fold of the mountains! when first from the height,
I saw thy deep forests all flooded with light,
So bright and so sudden thy loveliness smiled
That it seemed by enchantment to bloom in the wild.

Thy clouds of soft umbrage lay witchingly fair
In the clear mellow depth of that crystalline air;
And through trees interlacing stretched many a glade,
Where the sunlight fell chequered by masses of shade

From the rich flush of garden and woodland, the eye
Roamed up to blue ridges cut sharp in the sky,
And a brook flowed deep-sunken through thickets of green,
With a murmur that pensively blent with the scene.

igered till sunset bathed all in its glow,
. the soft-stealing shadow crept up from below,
a lone bird was warbling its latest farewell,
he star of the gloaming rose over the dell.

· valley! sleep on in the mountains' embrace,—
ne image no time from the heart will efface;
I hang the bright picture on Memory's wall,
. the sweet fleeting vision a wish can recall.

not amid softness and peace, such as thine,
ıld I dream that true happiness e'er could be mine,—
here, could the choice on myself be bestowed,
in earth's fairest spot would I fix my abode.

grace and the beauty which round him may smile,
heart of the pilgrim may sometimes beguile,—
may linger a moment, may say it is fair,
it is not his home,—his rest is not there!

THE VILLAGE FESTIVAL.

The bells ring out,—the villagers
Are keeping feast to-day,
Gay groups are winding through the vines
In pilgrim-like array,—
Some singing to the viols shrill
That tinkle on the way.

The banner on the chapel-tower
Droops down the flag-staff tall,
The shadows of the leafy planes
Are quivering round the wall,
And the spirit of a joyous time
Is brooding over all.

But pain and sorrow tread behind
The dancing steps of joy;
Some shadow hovering dark will oft
Life's brightest hour alloy:
Hard by the careless throng I see
A mother with her boy.

She sits before her cottage door,
Beneath a shady vine,—
In vain to her the music sounds,
In vain the sun doth shine;—
She only sees her little child
In mortal sickness pine.

He lieth moaning on her knee,
While she would soothe his pain,—
There is fever seething in the blood,
And throbbing in the vein;—
Alas! that little wasted cheek
Will never bloom again.

His voice no more at noon and eve
Will ring beside the hearth,—
No more his laugh her heavy heart
Will lighten with its mirth;—
His little joys have lain, alas!
Within a narrow girth.

Soon will a sad array be seen
Slow-winding down the dell,—
Before the priest the surpliced boy
Will swing his funeral bell;
And the people at their doors will say,
"'Tis little Manuel!"

Wherefore, with vacant eye she sees
The folk pass to and fro,—
She looks, but heeds not who they be,
Nor how they come and go;—
She only feels upon her heart
The clutch of deadly woe.

In after days, when of this feast
She hears the neighbours tell,
She will be silent, but the time
She will remember well;—
"That summer," she will think, "I lost
My darling Manuel!"

To her this grief will be a date
Through all the coming years,—
A pillar on her way, to which
She will often turn with tears;—
How many such a monument
Along life's path appears!

For the traces left by joy are faint,—
His step is light and free;
But the footprints of our suffering,
So deeply stamped they be,
That they never wear out from the sands
Of wreck-strewn memory.

THE CHARCOAL-BURNERS.

A LOFTY mountain-wall, that parts
  Two valleys fair and green,
We scaled, and stood in purer air,
  Where winds were blowing keen,—
It was as if, by sudden glance,
  Two separate worlds were seen.

One with a cloudless sky, and filled
  With sunlight to the sea,—
The other, dim with surging mists,
  That drifted loose and free,
And cast fantastic shadows down
  On rock, and stream, and tree.

Dark chestnut-trees, festooned with vines,
  Stood thick in either dell,—
The goat in fragrant thickets browsed
  And tinkled his small bell,
And from some mountain-cove, unseen,
  The goatherd blew his shell.

Through the rich greenery below
Were sprinkled quiet cots,
Each fenced by bristling spires of maize,
Or yams in marshy plots,
While mulberry, and quince, and fig,
Besprent the sunnier spots.

To us it seemed some happy haunt
Of freedom and content,—
A little world, shut out from care
And all disquietment;
So fancy pictured, when a group
Came up the slow ascent.

With toiling steps they gained the height,
A weary group of four,—
A care-worn man, on whom the weight
Of years was pressing sore,
And younger forms, untimely bent
Beneath the loads they bore.

Their heavy burdens they unbound,
And stopped a while to rest,—
One a mere child, who shrunk from sight,
With girlish fear possessed,—
A smile strayed o'er the old man's face,
When we the child addressed.

They had been in the woods, he said,
From early morning-light,
To watch their fires, amid the smoke,
With bleared and aching sight;
And, with their loads, a weary way
Must go ere fall of night.

Each day's hard labour barely earned
The needful means of life,—
With care and poverty they waged
A sharp, out-wearing strife;
And sorrows keener still were his,—
He had a dying wife.

A mournful story, that dispelled
My fancy's idle dream,—
A tale of want, and grief, and care,—
Life's one unchanging theme,
That makes the world a wilderness,
Whatever it may seem.

And so the scene, to us so fair,
For them no beauty had,—
Nor ever had they felt its power
To make the spirit glad;
With its dark drapery the mind
All festive nature clad.

They stood with lustreless, dull eyes
Amid the works of God,—
Earth bloomed in vain for them, in vain
Heaven cast its joy abroad;—
Their minds were struck with blight, their hearts
Were in the dust they trod.

Beyond the daily strife with want,
No care, no thought had they,—
No higher claim could break the spell
Of this habitual sway;—
And thus, from infancy to age,
One life had worn away.

From day to day, the dim-eyed mind
Its narrow circle paced,—
Its springs had rusted from disuse,
Its powers had run to waste,
And, line by line, the godlike sign
That stamped it was defaced.

Nor, musing thus, do I condemn
Its misery, but mourn
That care can so corrode the mind,
And leave the heart forlorn;—
Let man unveil the woes of man
In sorrow, not in scorn.

A VINTAGE SKETCH.

The joy of vintage fills the festive land,—
The treaders in the wine-press, treading long,
Lighten their labours with alternate song;
And not less happy is that high-perched band,
Who glean with quick and never-ceasing hand
The clusters, hanging amber-clear among
The withering leaves. An inspiration strong,
Of genial mirth, makes every heart expand.
Pleasant it is to mark in days like these
How lightly childhood wears its golden chain,—
To watch these boys, in playful rivalries,
Challenge each other in the leafy lane,
To try who highest o'er the poplar trees
Can hurl the unripe orange from the cane.

EVENING PICTURE.

Over the hill-edge ripples the warm light,—
One level ray along the sprouting vines
Gleams like a seraph's spear. The dusky lines
Of the far woods grow shapeless on the height,
Where the slow mists fold up their fleeces white,
Now flecked with purple. O'er that cloud of pines
The sky to clearest spirit of air refines,
And a star settles trembling on the sight.
Cool winds are rustling downwards to the seas,
To worn, homefaring men benignly given.
From the soft glooms of church-encircling trees,
Fast darkening in the shadows of the even,
The small bells sprinkle pensive cadences,
And Earth is peacefully atoned with Heaven!

PORTO SANTO,

AS SEEN FROM THE NORTH OF MADEIRA.

This island was the first that was colonized by the Portuguese adventurers of the fifteenth century, and is on this account remarkable as having led them into that brilliant track of discovery, which, at a later period, opened up to the mother country the riches of Brazil and India. Columbus married a daughter of Bartolomeo Perestrello, the first governor of the island, and one of the ablest navigators of the age. After his marriage, he lived for some time in Porto Santo, and the access he thereby obtained to Perestrello's charts and journals may be supposed to have strengthened his resolution to attempt that enterprise which made him, after twenty years, the discoverer of a new world.

THE sun is dim,—upon the sea
A sultry mist hangs heavily,—
  The water, air, and sky
Wear each the same dull, sober gleam;
So that one element they seem,
  Confused upon the eye.

Beyond these dusky clumps of pine,
The sea slopes upward to the line
  Of light that streaks the west;
The waves are murmuring faint and far,
And heaving restlessly, they are
  The very type of rest.

Glance northward through the haze, and mark
That shadowy island floating dark
  Amid the seas serene;
It seems some fair enchanted isle,
Like that which saw Miranda smile
  When Ariel sang unseen.

O happy, after all their fears,
Were those old Lusian mariners
  Who hailed that land the first,—
Upon whose seared and aching eyes,
With an enrapturing surprise,
  Its bloom of verdure burst!

Their anchor in a creek, shell-paven,
They dropped,—and hence "The Holy Haven"
  They named the welcome land;
The breezes strained their masts no more,—
And all around the sunny shore
  Was summer, laughing bland.

They wandered on through green arcades,
Where fruits were hanging in the shades,
And blossoms clustering fair;
Strange gorgeous insects shimmered by,
And from the brakes sweet minstrelsy
Entranced the woodland air.

Years passed, and to the island came
A mariner of unknown name,
And grave Castilian speech;
The spirit of a great emprise
Aroused him, and with flashing eyes
He paced the pebbled beach.

What time the sun was sinking slow,
And twilight spread a rosy glow
Around its single star,
His eye the western sea's expanse
Would search, creating by its glance
Some cloudy land afar.

He saw it when translucent even
Shed mystic light o'er Earth and Heaven,
Dim shadowed on the deep;
His fancy tinged each passing cloud
With the fine phantom, and he bowed
Before it in his sleep.

He hears greybearded sailors tell,
How the discoveries befell
That glorify their time;
"And forth I go, my friends," he cries,
"To a severer enterprise
Than tasked your glorious prime.

"Time was when these green isles, that stud
The expanse of this familiar flood,
Lived but in fancy fond.
Earth's limits,—think you here they are?
Here hath the Almighty fixed his bar,
Forbidding glance beyond?

"Each shell is murmuring on the shore,
And wild sea-voices evermore
Are sounding in my ear;
I long to meet the eastern gale,
And with a free and stretching sail
Through virgin seas to steer.

"Two galleys trim, some comrades stanch,
And I with hopeful heart would launch
Upon this shoreless sea.
Till I have searched it through and through,
And seen some far land looming blue,
My heart will not play free."

Forth fared he through the deep to rove,—
For months with angry winds he strove,
And passions fiercer still,
Until he found the long-sought land,
And leaped upon the savage strand
With an exulting thrill.

The tide of life now eddies strong
Through that broad wilderness, where long
The eagle fearless flew;
Where forests waved, fair cities rise,
And science, art, and enterprise,
Their restless aims pursue.

There dwells a people, at whose birth
The shout of freedom shook the earth,—
Whose fame through all the lands
Has travelled, and before whose eyes,
Bright with their glorious destinies,
A proud career expands.

I see their life by passion wrought
To intense endeavour, and my thought
Stoops backward in its reach
To him who, in that early time,
Revolved his enterprise sublime
On Porto Santo's beach.

Methinks that solitary soul
Held, in its ark, this radiant roll
  Of human hopes upfurled,—
That there in germ this vigorous life
Was sheathed, which now in earnest strife
  Is working through the world.

Still on our way, with care-worn face,
Abstracted eye, and sauntering pace,
  May pass one such as he,
Whose mind heaves with a secret force,
That shall be felt along the course
  Of far futurity.

Call him not fanatic or fool,
Thou Stoic of the modern school;
  Columbus-like, his aim
Points forward with a true presage,
And nations of a later age
  May rise to bless his name.

THE GOLD-SEEKER'S SONG.

Ye have heard what stirring thoughts
Roused the venturous souls of old,
When Jason and his Argonauts
Sought the fleece of gold.

Many a gallant youth of Greece,
High in hope, went o'er the foam,
Weary sought the shadowy fleece,
Weary wandered home.

Brighter than old poet's dreams,
We have found the region blest,
By the Sacramento's streams,
In the desolate West.

We have heard the golden river,
Chiming with metallic sound,—
Rapturous music which doth ever
Make the spirit bound.

We have seen the level prairie
  Sown broadcast with heavy gold,—
Found the glittering realm of Faëry,
    And the half not told.

Channels with its flakes are paven,
  Sands are sparkling with its light,
And the luminous land is graven
    With its ciphers bright.

'Tis like dew upon the waste,
  Here in scales and there in grains,
And the rocks are interlaced
    With its ruddy veins.

Come, then, to these yellow sands,
  Ye who drudge in sweat of brow,
And no more through barren lands
    Urge the thankless plough.

Ye who ere the dawning rise
  When the bell of the factory tolls,—
Ye who blear and sear your eyes
    Over glowing coals,—

To these golden shores repair;—
Who would grudge the time or toil,
When each mattock-stroke lays bare
Heaps of glorious spoil?

Ye whose names the law has scored,
Ye on whom opinion rails,
Come where Justice drops her sword,
And Fortune loads her scales.

'Tis a land without Bastiles,
Law or lawyer, priest or sage,—
Where time rings in with merry peals
Another golden age.

'Tis the grave of all degree,
Each man is his fellow's peer,
High and low, and bond and free,
Change their places here.

Free from watch, and safe from warden,
Ye may wander where ye please,
And no dragon keeps the garden
Of the Hesperides.

RHYMES OF A VIGIL.

Crimine quo merui, juvenis placidissime Divûm,
Quove errore miser, donis ut solus egerem,
Somne, tuis?

STATIUS.

WEARY heart! what makes thee beat
Such a loud and rapid measure?
Why this wild and feverish heat,
Ever burning in the breast,
Robbing day of all its pleasure,
And defrauding night of rest?
Tell me what unwonted weight
Hath upon thee pressed of late,
That thou should'st thine office do
With this quick, uneasy motion,
While the blood leaps to and fro
Like the chafing tides of ocean.
When I read, or when I think,
When I hover on the brink
Of slumber, wherefore dost thou start

And flutter so, my weary heart?
Why within my bosom bound
With this dull and heavy sound,
Like the hollow, throbbing bell
That rings out a funeral knell?
Why dost thou, O dewy Sleep!
Ever thus at distance keep;
Have I broken thy sweet law,
Sweet to soul, and sweet to sense,
That thou should'st so far withdraw
Thy bland refreshing influence?

When I was a careless boy,
Breathing the free air of joy,
By the first star lit to bed,
When my childish prayer was said;
Then, with quick, benign surprise,
Thou would'st fall upon my eyes,
As the soft and soundless dew
Lights upon the violets blue,—
As the small and murmuring rain,
Wept from summer clouds, which stain
The blue heavens an hour, and pass,
Having cheered the thirsty grass.
Then, or e'er I was aware,
Thou hadst caught me in thy snare,

Lulled me with thy drowsy wings;
From thy deep, soul-charming springs
Sprinkled over every sense
An oblivious influence;
Called up lovely shapes and bright
To bewitch me all the night,—
Store of radiant apparitions,
Castles, forests, shifting visions,
Flushed with gleams from Eastern skies,
Shifting ever to the chime
Of melodious phantasies,
From the Faëry land that lies
In that spicy Persian clime,
And the old enchanted time,
When the Caliphs in their state
In Bagdad, by the Tigris, sate.
Happy times! gone like a breath,—
Blissful nights for ever ended,
Visions, voices, marvels flown,
Days of innocence and faith,
When the mystery of Death
Was as yet uncomprehended,
Because Sin was yet unknown!
Happy ignorance, that goes
From the creature as it grows!
Like the bloom from off the rose,

Like the brightness from the eye,
Like the glory from the sky,
And the music of the stream,
And the witchery of the dream,—
All that in Life's morning glow
Once we saw, but see not now;
All that perishes in the strife
Of this care-corroded life,—
All that Wisdom from us takes
As its tribute,—all that makes
Childhood's world a paradise
(Rich in each resource to bless),—
To the weed-sown wilderness
That around our manhood lies!

When I was a student free,
With an earnest ecstasy,
Digging in the mines of old
For the brave barbaric gold,
From which ethnic sages wrought
Rare creations of high thought,
When I took a lofty pleasure
To lay bare their hidden treasure,—
Thirsted for that generous juice
Which the poets of old days,
In their passion-haunted lays

(For all generations' use),
Stored and sealèd to inspire
Nimble wits with its fine fire,—
I could hold at scorn thy power;
Many a joyous midnight hour
Would I rob thee of,—in vain
Would'st thou murmur and complain,—
And, in wrath at my disdain,
Thou wouldst strive and struggle hard,
With some well-contrived device,
To throw my spirit off its guard,
And steal on me by surprise.
Thou wouldst cast some shadow fair
O'er my mind,—into the air
Breathe a melting drowsy charm
My faint senses to disarm;
In my ear wouldst whisper bland,—
Thy constraining gentle hand
On my eyelids thou wouldst press,—
And a sense of weariness
Through my languid limbs infuse
By the virtue of thy dews,—
And a mist would swim before
My vision till I read no more.
Sleep! thou, then, wert never coy,—
In the middle of my joy,

Even when thou wert not sought,—
When most alien to my thought,
Thou wouldst come, unloved, unbidden;
Now thou wilt not come though chidden.

I repent me of the slight
Done to thee in days of yore,—
Days now ended evermore!—
And from under this great blight
Which I dreamt not would befall me,
Now, O Sleep! I vainly call thee.
Wilt thou not, O power benign,
Soothe me with thy anodyne,
And, in this extremity,
Cancel the severe decree
Which in anger thou hast passed?
Wilt thou still refuse to cast
O'er my sense that gentle rain,
Which shall ease me of my pain?

SONNET.

Oft when the moon has sunk beneath the night,
Nor gladdens heaven with her golden eye,
A fitful meteor burning in the sky
May bring the outline of his path in sight
To some belated shepherd. By its light
The wold is brightened, the far hills seem nigh
At whose dark feet his lonely hut doth lie,
And thankfully he guides his steps aright.
So when the world, beneath a weight of doom,
Seemed reeling on through darkness, vague and blind,
Some transitory brightness might illume
The great interlunation of the mind,—
Some dim presentiment, that through the gloom
A better light should rise to bless mankind.

A FANCY.

Below me spreads a wide and lonely beach,
The ripple washing higher on the sands,—
A river that has come from far-off lands
Is coiled behind in many a shining reach :
But now it widens, and its banks are bare,—
It settles as it nears the moaning sea ;
An inward eddy checks the current free,
And breathes a briny dampness through the air.
Beyond the waves, low vapours through the skies
Were trailing, like a battle's broken rear ;
But, smitten by pursuing winds, they rise,
And the blue slopes of a far coast appear,
With shadowy peaks, on which the sunlight lies
Uplifted in aërial distance clear.

CLAVERHOUSE.

STAND pilloried for ever on the stage
Of infamy, and bear to latest time
The blood-red superscription of thy crime,
That men, O Graeme! may wonder at the age
Which gendered thee. What generous heart could wage
Such war with peasants, maidens in their prime,
And grey-haired pastors? Who so basely climb
To greatness, linking such a heritage
Of foul dishonour to a noble name?
But thy memorial perished: childless thou
Wert written in the land. Thine evil fame
Has smirched the gilded bauble on thy brow;
And the blind zeal which would exalt thee now
Embalms corruption, and must share its shame.

THE PICTURE OF A MARTYRDOM.

MEEK, suffering saint! in holy peacefulness
Thou standest, budding to thy virgin prime,
Fair as a lily of thy southern clime
Erect against the rain. Thy Lord doth bless
And help thee in this hour: the sharp distress
Even unto death, which tries thee, doth sublime
Thy maiden modesty before the time
Into a graver air of saintliness.
With a sweet smile thou liftest thy pure eyes
Heavenward, the while these glowing pincers tear
Thy dove-like bosom. In thy golden hair
The lictor's hand is twisted. With surprise
Thy brutal judge looks on. But in the air
Thou seest the angel waiting with the prize.

THE GRAVE OF DODDRIDGE AT LISBON.

In that fair city by the Tagus' side,
I stood beside the grave which holds in trust,
Until the resurrection of the just,
The ashes of a spirit glorified.
I thought of how he lived, and how he died,
And how a sacred reverence guards the dust,
And keeps untarnished by sepulchral rust
A name with Heaven and holiness allied.
A bird was singing in the cypress-tops,—
It seemed an echo of the voice which led
The soul to rise to its immortal hopes,
Repeating still the words on earth it said:
And gleams of light were trembling on the slopes,
Like angels' shadows watching round the dead.

RUINS OF CARTEIA,

A PHŒNICIAN CITY NEAR GIBRALTAR, SUPPOSED TO BE THE ANCIENT TARSHISH.

A LONELY grange that crests a gentle hill,
Upon the margin of a bright blue bay,
Some stone-heaps, strewn like grave-mounds
by the way,
Are all that keep thy site in memory still,
Proud daughter of proud Tyre! Her wealth and skill
Adorned thee for the Roman's sterner sway;
But now on both, alike in your decay,
The careless fisher spreads his nets at will.
Yet far less sad to me this silent scene
Than such a life as lingers still beneath
The stately towers where Rome once sat as queen,—
The mask without the spark of vital breath,—
The spirit rusted, like a blade once keen,
And some dim gilding left upon the sheath.

THE BAY OF BARCELONA.

'Tis evening, and the thunder-cloud
Sinks spent behind the western hill,
The light has rent its lurid shroud,
And breezes waft it at their will;
The golden rays of sunset stream
On castled mount and turret grey,
The clear air quivers in the gleam
That falls upon the glassy bay.

The scattered barks to land return,
Their toils forgot in sight of home,—
They bravely dared the lowering morn,
And clove their path through mist and foam;
At noon the cloudy north-wind blew,
The answering waves rose wild and high,
And drifting vapours swept from view
The landmarks sacred to the eye.

But now, like sea-birds, to the land
They gladly stretch a snowy wing,
And cloudless skies and breezes bland
Their homeward course are welcoming.
The sails reflect the brimming light,
And, as the shallops onward glide,
A softened shadow, dim and white,
Floats far beneath them in the tide.

How blest the life which, in its prime,
Some testing ill hath bravely borne,
To hail a tranquil evening-time,
And skies that wear the tints of morn!
But woe to him who wakes at last
From listless dreams and false repose,
To see at even the gathering blast,
And life first darkened at its close!

CORTONA.

WHERE hoar Cortona crests a mountain lone,
Fenced by the massy walls Etruria reared,
Ere yet Rome's straggling cabins had appeared
By the low hills that were to be her throne,—
I looked o'er plains of richest verdure shown
In the still clearness of the summer air,
Far-surging waves of woodland, hamlets fair,
And storied castles, wildly overgrown.
The windless heat was settling on the broad
Sweet champaign, mellowing all its fruitage green,
From sharp Monte Pulciano, with a load
Of vines upon its slopes, to thy serene
And silent shore, O crystal Thrasymene!
Where olives fringe the rill* that ran with blood.

* The Sanguinetto.

INCISA,

THE SCENE OF PETRARCH'S BOYHOOD, NEAR FLORENCE.

THAT hour abides with me, as doth a trance
Of pleasure, when, by Arno's wave reclined,
I watched the poplars twinkling in the wind,
And the quick martin through the arches glance
Across the yellow stream; or heard, perchance,
Some vintage-maiden sing along the shore
A song that sweeter seemed when Nature wore
So sweet a smile upon her countenance.
It was where, 'mid her vines and olives pale,
Incisa sits, rejoicing that she gave
His childhood's home to Petrarch. The low wail
Of the immortal lover, from his grave
Beyond the Po, came up the Tuscan wave,
And faintly murmured through the quiet vale.

DISCOVERY OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

I.

STRAIT OF DESPAIR! thy frozen lips at last
Unclose, to teach our seamen how to sift
A passage where blue icebergs clash and drift,
And the shore loosely rattles in the blast.
We hold the secret thou hast clenched so fast
For ages,—our best blood has earned the gift,—
Blood spilt, or hoarded up in patient thrift,
Through sunless months in ceaseless peril passed.
But what of daring Franklin? Who may know
The pangs that wrung that heart so proud and brave,
In secret wrestling with its deadly woe,
And no kind voice to reach him o'er the wave?
Now he sleeps fast beneath his shroud of snow,
And the cold Pole-Star only knows his grave.

II.

Alone, on some sharp cliff, I see him strain,
O'er the white waste, his keen, sagacious eye,
Or scan the signs of the snow-freighted sky,
In hope of quick deliverance,—but in vain;
Then, faring to his icy tent again,
To cheer his mates with his familiar smile,
And talk of home and kinsfolk, to beguile
Slow hours, which freeze the blood and numb
the brain.
Long let our hero's memory be enshrined
In all true British hearts! He calmly stood
In danger's foremost rank, nor looked behind.
He did his work, not with the fevered blood
Of battle, but with hard-tried fortitude,
In peril dauntless, and in death resigned.

III.

Despond not, Britain! Should this sacred hold
Of Freedom, still inviolate, be assailed,
The high, unblenching spirit which prevailed
In ancient days is neither dead nor cold.
Men are still in thee of heroic mould,—
Men whom thy grand old sea-kings would have hailed
As worthy peers, invulnerably mailed,
Because by duty's sternest law controlled.
Thou yet shalt rise, and send abroad thy voice
Among the nations, battling for the right,
In the unrusted armour of thy youth;
And the oppressed shall hear it and rejoice,
For on thy side is the resistless might
Of Freedom, Justice, and Eternal Truth!

SONNET—BY THE SEA-SIDE.

Run in, glad waves, scooped in transparent shells,
Which catch soft lights of emerald ere they break;
Let the small ripple fret the sand, and make
The faintest chime of music, such as dwells
Far down within the sea-conch's murmuring cells,—
While, hovering o'er the spray, the white birds wet
Their wings, and shouting fishers draw the net
To land, and far sails glitter on the swells.
'Tis bliss to rest, the while these soft blue skies
Breathe over earth their benison of peace,
To feel these lovely forms enchant the eyes,
And grow into the mind by slow degrees,—
Till, breathless as a woodland pool, it lies,
And sleeps above its sleeping images.

MY FIRST BIRTHDAY IN A FOREIGN LAND.

Behind my wandering steps, the busy hands
Of Time build up the moments into years,
And noiselessly from these fast-drooping sands
The temple of my mortal life he rears.
Alas! to me too surely it appears
A weak devoted structure, which commands
No prospect of continuance, and stands
On a most tottering base. But Thou these fears,
O God! canst turn to hopes, that when this frail
Tent of the spirit shrivels into dust,
One of Thy many mansions shall be mine,
Eternal in the heavens. So through the vale
Of Life I go my way with lowly trust,
Contented heart, and will resigned to Thine!

THE DIAL AND FOUNTAIN.

THE day its course appointed calmly holds,—
Morn wears to noon, and noon to starry night,
And, as a fruitful seed, each dawn unfolds,
In fair succession, all the hours of light.

The river glideth seawards,—ever full
From bank to bank, the abounding current sweeps;
And, fenced by quiet hills, the lonely pool
Clasps the same shadows in its crystal deeps.

The sprouting grain that flushes all the spring
Its future perfectness may surely know,
And wait serenely for its ripening
Through summer suns to autumn's golden glow.

Alas! that he for whom the sunlight shines,
And the sweet seasons all their wealth mature,
Can track his path by no unfailing signs,
Nor front the future with a glance secure.

His daybreak may not shine all round his sky,
No mellow fruitage crown his hopeful prime,—
Death, near the gate of Life, may ambushed lie,
And strike him in the middle-watch of time.

The river of his life a while expands,—
Trees fringe the banks, and fair winds crisp the tide,
But soon it wanders out through burning sands,
And night beholds it lost in deserts wide.

I followed once a streamlet up a dell,
Where birds were warbling in the early day,
And traced its waters to their parent-well,
Whereby there stood a dial mossed and grey.

"I only count Time's sunny hours,"*—so meant
The antique legend quaintly carved above;
"Then count one now," I cried, and stood content
In thoughtless mood to watch the shadow move.

Slowly it crept a while, but suddenly
Traversed the dial-plate with ominous haste;
One moment, and the sun yet climbed the sky,
The next, he sank far in the darkening west.

* Non horas numero, nisi serenas.

The fountain, too, that rippled o'er the lips
Of its scooped basin, ceased at once to flow;
Its waters, struck with chill by that eclipse,
Ebbed, shrinking to their viewless springs below.

Then o'er my spirit, with an instant glance
Of light, shone forth the import of the sign;
A wind-like sound sighed through it as in trance,—
The accents of a voice not undivine:—

"Soon on thy path shall dreary shadows fall,
And the free air grow heavy to thy breath,
And all the springs of thought be dried, and all
Thy hopes lie trodden in the dust of death.

"But still the stars shall charm the evening-air,
And duly shall the dawn go up the east,
And nature's framework still be firm and fair,—
The Temple standing longer than the Priest.

"Yet mourn not that so soon thou must depart,
While nature changeless works in earth and sky;
No higher life is stirring in her heart,—
Thou hast a spirit that shall never die!

"Therefore thou hast no certain hold on time,
Because with an immortal being blest;
Thy soul is alien to this earthly clime,
And only in the Infinite can rest.

"Then break the cords that bind thee to the dust,
Lift up thy spirit to its high estate,
Put on thy shining robes, and tread in trust
The path that leadeth to the Heavenly Gate.

"If Life's light darken, through that higher sphere
Give thine ethereal hopes their radiant range;
And, fair through Death, those mansions shall appear
Where calm perfection triumphs over change!"

O surely much of Heaven was in that hour,—
And often to my heart will memory bring
Its vanished vision, with reviving power,—
The darkened Dial, and the dried-up Spring!

TO A FRIEND IN THE MINISTRY.

STILL in my memory dwells the happy time,
When, closely linked in friendship's sweet accord,
We gathered wisdom from the sacred Word,
Or ancient books, enriched with truth sublime.
Then, side by side, it was our wont to climb
The temple-stairs, where, kneeling, we implored
Support to fight the battles of the Lord,
To which we then did consecrate our prime.
Now fast, in the vanguard of God's array,
Thou standest like a soldier tried and true;
I, like-accoutred, early in the day,
Outworn and drooping, from the strife withdrew;
And keep my lonely watch beside the way,
With thee in spirit, though removed from view.

SONNET.

My grief pursues me through the Land of Sleep,
It winds into the secret of my dreams,
And shapes their shadowy pomp. When fancy seems
To charm my fevered spirit into deep
Forgetfulness, the restless thought will creep
From its dim ambush, startling that repose,
And glooms and spectral terrors round me close,
Like iron walls I may not overleap.
And then I seem to see thy face again,
But not, belovèd! as thou wert and art,
And, with thy sweet voice tingling in my brain,
From this great agony of fear I start,
To feel the slow throb of habitual pain,
And undulled anguish grasping at my heart.

BOAZ AND THE REAPERS.

"And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee."—RUTH ii. 4.

O SIMPLE piety of early days,
When the kind master, 'mid his golden sheaves,
Greets in God's name his reapers, and receives
Their greeting in devout and fervent phrase.
Here gladness dwells, and peace, which pastoral lays
Have pictured never,—sacred peace which springs
Beneath the shadow of Religion's wings.
When from a nation's heart its faith decays,
An inward and uniting virtue dies;
All social elements in that great wane
Become distempered,—firm and genial ties
Relax, to part when comes the testing strain,—
And those once linked by steadfast sympathies
Stand sundered, in defiance and disdain.

A REMEMBRANCE.

Though I most surely know where thou art gone,
Now thou art vanished from our mortal sight,
And that thou hast thy dwelling in the light
Which no unpurgèd eye may look upon,
Still thy sweet image, as it once was known
And loved in sorrow, and thy gentle face
With its mild suffering aspect, keeps its place
Unchanged, unchangeable on memory's throne.
I seem to see thee, near and yet apart
From the great congregation of the blest,
Entranced in speechless wonder that thou art
With Him for ever whom thou lovest best,
With a great weight of gladness on thy heart,
And an immortal consciousness of rest.

A PARABLE-MIRACLE.

O World! the angels' eyes, struck with thy beauty,
Hung over thee, enamoured, in thy prime,
When thou, at concord with the law of duty,
Went'st onward with a brightness into time.

Order was in thy goings, Peace possessed
Thy heart, and all was harmony and grace;
God, lifting up His hands, His last-born blessed,
And from His smile, light shone upon thy face.

O hadst thou stood but loyal to His will,
Thy primal glory had not ceased to shine,
For thee thy Maker's benison been still
A welling fount of influence benign.

Angels had breathed thine unpolluted air,
As in the suburb of their native heaven,
And God Himself, no feared intruder there,
Beneath thy shady trees had walked at even.

But madness struck thee on a sudden; Sin
Banished sweet Peace, the angel, from thy breast,
And countless shapes of evil entered in,—
Suspicion, Sorrow, Changefulness, Unrest.

And now thy name is Legion; and afar
From God and goodness thou art wildly driven,
In the ascendant of a baleful star
Thy wail of anguish rises up to heaven.

The golden chain of law and duty thou
Hast broken, in the frenzy of thy wrath,
But heavier fetters clank upon thee now,
And death's dark shadow haunts thy troubled path.

Yet One has met thee on thy reckless way,
His power, His love, is on thee like a spell,—
The inward struggle strengthens day by day,
Which yet shall free thee from the fiends of hell.

Yes! thou shalt yet, with raiment white and holy,
Come forth thy blest Deliverer to greet,
And angels shall behold thee sitting lowly,
Thy madness ended, at thy Saviour's feet!

HYMNS AND MEDITATIONS.

HYMNS AND MEDITATIONS.

I.

y son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him."—HEBREWS xii. 5.

O THOU! whose tender feet have trod
The thorny path of woe,
Forbid that I should slight the rod,
Or faint beneath the blow.
My spirit to its chastening stroke
I meekly would resign,
Nor murmur at the heaviest yoke
That tells me I am Thine.
Give me the spirit of Thy trust,
To suffer as a son,—
To say, though lying in the dust,
My Father's will be done!

I know that trial works for ends
Too high for sense to trace,
That oft in dark attire, He sends
Some embassy of grace.
May none depart till I have gained
The blessing which it bears,
And learn, though late, I entertained
An angel unawares.
So shall I bless the hour that sent
The mercy of the rod,
And build an altar by the tent
Where I have met with God.

II.

"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."
JOHN xi. 32.

WE sadly watched the close of all,
Life balanced on a breath;
We saw upon his features fall
The awful shade of death.
All dark and desolate we were,
And murmuring Nature cried,
"O surely, Lord, hadst Thou been here,
Our brother had not died!"

But when its glance the memory cast
On all that grace had done,—
And thought of lifelong warfare passed,
And endless victory won,—
Then Faith, prevailing, wiped the tear,
And looking upward, cried,
"O Lord, Thou surely hast been here,—
Our brother has not died!"

III.

"Ye are complete in Him.—COLOSSIANS ii. 10.

In Thee my heart, O Jesus, finds repose,—
Thou bringest rest to all that weary are:
Until the day-spring of Thy presence rose
Upon my path, I wandered faint and far.
My feet had gone astray
Upon a lonesome way,—
Each guide I followed failed me in my need,—
Each staff I leaned on proved a broken reed.

Then through that troubled gloom I looked to Thee,—
And Thou wert present to the call of prayer:
One word of Thine awoke new hope in me,
One touch unbound my heavy load of care.
Thou in the weary land,
Didst take me by the hand,
And lead me on with Thee, my chosen Guide,
In pleasant ways, and peaceful streams beside.

Complete in Thee, my nature, day by day,
Finds the fulfilment of its deepest need,—
Freed from itself,—surrendered to Thy sway,—
It enters into liberty indeed;
Thy love, a genial law,
Its every aim doth draw
Within its blest dominion, and allure
Its longings to the perfect and the pure.

Thy presence is the never-failing spring
Of life and comfort in each darker hour,
And, through Thy grace benignly ministering,
Grief wields a secret purifying power.
'Tis sweet, O Lord, to know
Thy sympathy with woe,—
Sweeter to walk with Thee on ways apart,
Than with the world, where heart is shut to heart.

For Thee Eternity reserves her hymn,—
For Thee Earth has her prayers, and Heaven her vows;
The saints adore Thee, and the seraphim
Under Thy glory stoop their shining brows.
O may this light divine
Gleam on these steps of mine,
Give my fainting spirit from above,
Guide me onwards to Thy perfect love!

IV.

"Bid me come unto Thee on the water."—MATTHEW xiv. 28.

O, IN the dark and stormy night,
When far from land I cry with fear,
Shine o'er the waves, thou holy light,—
Then, O my Saviour, be thou near!
Though from afar, let me but see
Dim through the dark Thy gliding form,
And bright the gloomy hour shall be
That brought Thy presence in the storm.

Then lift Thy hand, and bid me come,
And higher though the tempest blow,
I through the wind and through the gloom
To Thy loved side will gladly go.
The wind is fair that blows to Thee,
The wave is firm that bears me on,
And stronger still that love to me
Which many waters could not drown.

Or for Thy coming bid me wait,
My soul in patience shall abide;
And though the storm may not abate,
I will not seek another guide.
With Thee I fear no angry blast,—
With Thee my course points ever home;
And in good time, all perils past,
To the Fair Havens I shall come.

V.

"The footsteps of the flock."—Song of Solomon, i. 8.

Not always, Lord, in pastures green
The sheep at noon Thou feedest,
Where in the shade they lie
Within Thy watchful eye;
Not always under skies serene
The white-fleeced flock Thou leadest.

On rugged ways, with bleeding feet,
They leave their painful traces;
Through deserts drear they go,
Where wounding briars grow,
And through dark valleys, where they meet
No quiet resting-places.

Not always by the waters still,
Or lonely wells palm-hidden,
Do they find happy rest,
And, in Thy presence blest,
Delight themselves, and drink their fill
Of pleasures unforbidden.

Their track is worn on Sorrow's shore,
Where windy storms beat ever,—
Their troubled course they keep,
Where deep calls unto deep;
So going till they hear the roar
Of the dark-flowing river.

But wheresoe'er their steps may be,
So Thou their path be guiding,
O be their portion mine!—
Show me the secret sign,
That I may trace their way to Thee,
In thee find rest abiding.

Slowly they gather to the fold
Upon thy holy mountain,—
There, resting round Thy feet,
They dread no storm nor heat,
And slake their thirst where Thou hast rolled
The stone from Life's full fountain.

VI.

SABBATH EVENING.

O TIME of tranquil joy and holy feeling!
When over earth God's Spirit from above
Spreads out His wings of love;
When sacred thoughts, like angels, come appealing
To our tent-doors;—O eve, to earth and heaven
The sweetest of the seven!

How peaceful are thy skies! thy air is clearer,
As on the advent of a gracious time:
The sweetness of its prime
Blesseth the world, and Eden's days seem nearer;
I hear, in each faint stirring of the breeze,
God's voice among the trees.

O while thy hallowed moments are distilling
Their fresher influence on my heart like dews,
The chamber where I muse
Turns to a temple!—He whose converse thrilling
Honoured Emmaus, that old eventide,
Comes sudden to my side.

'Tis light at evening-time when thou art present,—
Thy coming to the eleven in that dim room
Brightened, O Christ! its gloom;
So bless my lonely hour that memories pleasant
Around the time a heavenly gleam may cast,
Which many days shall last.

Raise each low aim, refine each high emotion,
That with more ardent footstep I may press
Toward Thy holiness;
And, braced for sacred duty by devotion,
Support my cross along that rugged road
Which Thou hast sometime trod.

I long to see Thee, for my heart is weary,—
O when, my Lord! in kindness wilt Thou come
To call Thy banished home?
The scenes are cheerless, and the days are dreary,—
From sorrow and from sin I would be free,
And evermore with Thee.

Even now I see the golden city shining
Up the blue depths of that transparent air,—
How happy all is there!
There breaks a day which never knows declining,—
A Sabbath through whose circling hours the blest
Beneath Thy shadow rest!

VII.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me."—John xiv. 1.

No more let sorrow cloud the eye,
Nor fears the spirit fill;
Though now the parting hour is nigh,
My heart is with you still.
My Father sent me from above,
His mercy's brightest sign;
And if you trust His changeless love,—
O wherefore doubt of mine?

The stretching shadow of the cross
Now overcasts my soul;
You sorrow for the coming loss,—
I long to reach the goal.
My love must first be tried by death
Before it prove its power,
And, through its triumph, give you faith
For many an evil hour.

Dark days will come when I depart,
But cast your care on me,
And I, unseen, shall keep the heart
From fear and fainting free.
The thorny path that I have trod
Is also traced for you;
But where I walked alone with God,—
Ye have your Saviour too.

VIII.

TRUTH.

The rounded whole of Truth the mortal mind
May never mirror in its narrow sphere,
Yet, as it looks to Heaven, may hope to find
The faint reflection ever wax more clear.

To him that seeks, it is more largely sent,
Nor need he grieve that all can not be given;
Upon the leaf each dew-drop is content
To hold its segment of the round of Heaven.

IX.

"Faith worketh by love."—GAL. v. 6.

O MOURN not that the days are gone,
The old and wondrous days,
When Faith's unearthly glory shone
Along our earthly ways;
When the Apostle's gentlest touch
Wrought like a sacred spell,
And health came down on every couch
On which his shadow fell.

The glory is not wholly fled
That shone so bright before,
Nor is the ancient virtue dead
Though thus it works no more.
Still godlike Power with Goodness dwells,
And blessings round it move,
And Faith still works its miracles,
Though now it works by Love.

It may not on the crowded ways
  Lift up its voice as then,
But still with sacred might it sways
  The stormy minds of men.
Grace still is given to make the faint
  Grow stronger through distress,
And even the shadow of the saint
  Retains its power to bless.

X.

A REQUIEM.

Thou art free from pain, and sorrow
Like a cloud from thee hath passed;
And the day that knows no morrow
Hath arisen on thee at last.
The fair seal of life for ever
Glitters clear upon thy brow;
And the sound of the dark river
Hath no terror to thee now.

Sore we wept when we were taking
Our long farewell look at thee;
But around thee light was breaking
Which no eye but thine might see.
On thine ear a voice was falling
Which to our ear might not come,—
'Twas the voice of Jesus calling
His belovèd to her home.

In the snow-white linen vested,
Thou art sitting at the feast,
And thy head is sweetly rested
On the Saviour's loving breast.
Thou hast heard the saints all singing,
Thou hast also waved the palm,
While the golden harps were ringing
In the pauses of the psalm.

Thou hast walked the pathways golden,
Where the faithful walk in white,—
With undazzled eyes beholden
The fair city's jasper-light.
Thou art safe there from all evil,—
There no hurtful thing may be;
O'er the world, the flesh, the devil,
Thou hast gained the victory.

Wherefore we do not bewail thee,
But will press the faster on,
Till we meet thee, till we hail thee,
In the land where thou art gone:
Where the crystal river floweth
For the comfort of the blessed,
And the tree of healing throweth
Its broad shadow o'er their rest.

XI.

THE DEATH OF A BELIEVER.

Acts xii.

The Apostle slept,—a light shone in the prison,—
An angel touched his side,
"Arise," he said, and quickly he hath risen,
His fettered arms untied.

The watchers saw no light at midnight gleaming,—
They heard no sound of feet;
The gates fly open, and the saint, still dreaming
Stands free upon the street.

So when the Christian's eyelid droops and closes
In Nature's parting strife,
A friendly angel stands where he reposes
To wake him up to life.

He gives a gentle blow, and so releases
The spirit from its clay;
From sin's temptations, and from life's distresses,
He bids it come away.

It rises up, and from its darksome mansion
It takes its silent flight,
And feels its freedom in the large expansion
Of heavenly air and light.

Behind, it hears Time's iron gates close faintly,—
It is now far from them,
For it has reached the city of the saintly,
The new Jerusalem.

A voice is heard on earth of kinsfolk weeping
The loss of one they love;
But he is gone where the redeemed are keeping
A festival above.

The mourners throng the ways, and from the steeple
The funeral-bell tolls slow;
But on the golden streets the holy people
Are passing to and fro;

And saying as they meet, "Rejoice! another
Long-waited-for is come;
The Saviour's heart is glad, a younger brother
Hath reached the Father's home!"

XII.

A THOUGHT AT EVENING.

The peaks are swathed with rosy light,—
Day's shadow lingering up the skies,—
And clouds above them, warm and bright,
Are floating, flushed with kindred dyes.
Below, the valleys lurk in gloom,—
The woods a sombre aspect wear;
But high above, that tender bloom
Along the ridge refines the air.

At evening-time it shall be light,
Though clouds at dawn may mantle heaven,—
Though wind and rain, though mist and blight,
Across the lowering day be driven.
Stand thou unshaken in thy place,
And fix thy glance upon the sky;
At last a gleam will reach thy face,
A heavenly gleam that will not die.

XIII.

"The light that led astray
Was light from heaven!"

It could not be; no light from heaven
Has ever led astray,—
Its constant stars to guide are given,
And never to betray.
The meteor in the marish bred
May lure the foot afar,
But never wayfarer misled
Would say it was a star.

When passion drives to wild excess,
And folly wakes to shame,
It cannot make the madness less
To cast on heaven the blame.
O blindly wander if thou wilt,
And break from virtue's rule,—
But add not blasphemy to guilt,
And doubly play the fool.

The light that seemed to shine on high,
And led thee on to sin,
Was but reflected to thine eye
From passion's fire within.

And Conscience warned thee of the guide,
And Reason raised her voice;
Thou wert not forced to turn aside,
But freely mad'st the choice.

Thy Will its false enchantment drew
Before thy clearer sight,
And round the hovering tempter threw
An angel's robe of light.
And thus from virtue's peaceful way
So far by passion driven,
How could the light that led astray
Be light that shone from heaven?

Why, reckless of its native aim,
Should genius, throned so high,
E'er lend the sanction of its name
To consecrate a lie,
If not that a corrupted heart
Degrades the noblest mind,
And turns to shame the glorious art
That should have blessed mankind?
O spurn the guilty thought away!
Eternity will tell
That every light that led astray
Was light that shone from hell.

XIV.

All sainted souls, Lord, are the chords
From which thy fingers draw
Immortal music to the tones
Of Thy most holy Law.
The melodies which Thy wide heavens
Through all the ages fill,
Are wills responding, and at one
With Thine, the Master-Will.

The seraph's harp is but a heart
That knows no law but thine,
The cherub's song a creature's love
At one with Love Divine;—
And music breathes from all Thy worlds,
Because they never stray
From the blue spaces where of old
Thy hand hath traced their way.

The soul of man was once the lyre
On which Thy fingers played,

Heaven's music then was heard on Earth,
And Earth an answer made,—
Till Sin untuned the instrument
Of paradisal days,
Broke all its golden chords, and marred
Man's blessèd psalm of praise.

Yet not for ever will it lie
Mute, shattered on the ground,
One hand can wake its strings again
To some preluding sound,—
Some wandering murmurs of the strain
That clear through Eden rung,
When first it mingled in the hymn
The stars of morning sung.

One sweet subduing touch contains
The secret charm to move
And re-inspire it with the power
And kindling glow of love.
The Saviour's hand re-strings the chords,
And makes it here begin
The everlasting psalm which floats
Through worlds unstained by sin.

XV.

THE DEATH OF AN INFANT.

I HEARD the angels singing
As they went up through the sky,
A sweet infant's spirit bringing
To its Father's house on high:

"Happy thou, so soon ascended,
With thy shining raiment on!
Happy thou, whose race is ended
With a crown so quickly won!

"Hushed is now thy lamentation,
And the first words to thee given
Will be words of adoration
In the blessèd speech of Heaven;
For the blood thou mightst have slighted
Hath now made thee pure within,
And the evil seed is blighted
That had ripened unto sin.

"We will lead thee by a river,
Where the flowers are blooming fair;
We will sing to thee for ever,
For no night may darken there.
Thou shalt walk in robes of glory;
Thou shalt wear a golden crown;
Thou shalt sing Redemption's story,
With the saints around the throne.

"Thou shalt see that better country,
Where a tear-drop never fell,—
Where a foe made never entry,
And a friend ne'er said farewell; *
Where, upon the radiant faces
That will shine on thee alway,
Thou shalt never see the traces
Of estrangement or decay.

"Thee we bear, a lily-blossom,
To a sunnier clime above;
There to lay thee in a bosom
Warm with more than mother's love.

* "Days without night, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening; and they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away."—JEREMY TAYLOR.

Happy thou, so timely gathered
From a region cold and bare,
To bloom on, a flower unwithered,
Through an endless summer there!"

Through the night that dragged so slowly,
Watched a mother by a bed;
Weeping wildly, kneeling lowly,
She would not be comforted.
To her lost one she was clinging,
Raining tears upon a shroud;
And those angel-voices singing
Could not reach her through the cloud.

XVI.

A THOUGHT ON TIME.

How oft we fret for Time's delays,
And urge him on with sighs,
But to lament in after days
How rapidly he flies!
Too late we sorrow to receive
What once we thought a boon:
Life hurries past us, but we grieve
To reach the grave too soon.

XVII.

LINES.

Honour will oft elude the grasp
That rashly courts the prize;
The radiant phantom we would clasp,
Still, as we follow, flies.
But oft, on Duty's lowly way,
Unsought, will Honour meet
The patient traveller, and lay
Her treasures at his feet.

Thus he who went to seek of old
Some asses that had strayed,
Found on his way a crown of gold
Placed sudden on his head.
And he whose bad ambition dared
A father's crown to seize,
Found treason's bitter doom prepared
Among the forest-trees!

XVIII.

HUMILITY.

O! LEARN that it is only by the lowly
The paths of peace are trod;
If thou wouldst keep thy garments white and holy,
Walk humbly with thy God.

The man with earthly wisdom high-uplifted
Is in God's sight a fool;
But he in heavenly truth most deeply gifted
Sits lowest in Christ's school.

The lowly spirit God hath consecrated
As his abiding rest;
And angels by some patriarch's tent have waited,
When kings had no such guest.

The dew that never wets the flinty mountain
Falls in the valleys free;
Bright verdure fringes the small desert-fountain,
But barren sand the sea.

Not in the stately oak the fragrance dwelleth
Which charms the general wood,
But in the violet low, whose sweetness telleth
Its unseen neighbourhood.

The censer swung by the proud hand of merit
Fumes with a fire abhorred;
But Faith's two mites, dropped covertly, inherit
A blessing from the Lord.

Round lowliness a gentle radiance hovers,
A sweet, unconscious grace;
Which, even in shrinking, evermore discovers
The brightness on its face.

Where God abides, Contentment is and Honour,
Such guerdon Meekness knows;
His peace within her, and His smile upon her,
Her saintly way she goes.

Through the strait gate of life she passes stooping,
With sandals on her feet;
And pure-eyed Graces, hand in hand come trooping,
Their sister fair to greet.

The angels bend their eyes upon her goings,
And guard her from annoy;
Heaven fills her heart with silent overflowings
Of its perennial joy.

The Saviour loves her, for she wears the vesture
With which He walked on earth;
And through her childlike glance, and step, and gesture
He knows her heavenly birth.

He now beholds this seal of glory graven
On all whom He redeems,
And in His own bright City, crystal-paven,
On every brow it gleams.

The white-robed saints, the throne-steps singing under,
Their state all meekly wear;
Their praise wells up from hidden springs of wonder
That grace has brought them there.

XIX.

TO A CHRISTIAN FRIEND.

I saw thee not till slow decay
Had touched thy beauty's early bloom,
Till grief had met thee on thy way
And overcast thy life with gloom;
And yet, methought, thy face was bright
With gleams of an ethereal light.

Yes! thine was beauty all unknown
To those who live through cloudless days;
The peace, possessed by them alone
Who meekly walk on Sorrow's ways,
Gleamed through thy spirit's fleshly veil,
And brightened all thy features pale.

The light of saintly Patience shone
Serenely in thy quiet eye,
And Hope thy marble brow upon
Set the clear signet of the sky,—
And Love was singing all day long
Within thy heart an angel's song.

And Faith, that can the light of Heaven
  Beyond Time's streaming vapours see;—
All these to thee thy God hath given,
  And He hath taught thy soul to be
Uplifted high without disdain,
And greatly purified through pain.

A darker path must yet be passed
  Before those radiant bounds appear,
And anxious thoughts may overcast
  Thy spirit with a natural fear;
But, safe in everlasting arms,
Thou need'st not dread unknown alarms.

The shadows may fall deep and chill
  Upon thy lone mysterious way,
But thou shalt go unto the hill
  Of frankincense, until the day
Shall lighten in the rosy East,
And wake thee up to endless rest.

XX.

"He abideth faithful."—2 Tim. ii. 13.

Friends I love may die or leave me,
Friends I trust may treacherous prove,
But Thou never wilt deceive me,
O my Saviour! in Thy love.
Change can ne'er this union sever,
Death its links may never part,—
Yesterday, to-day, for ever,
Thou the same Redeemer art.

On the cross love made Thee bearer
Of transgressions not Thine own;
And that love still makes Thee sharer
In our sorrows on the throne.
From Thy glory Thou art bending
Still on earth a pitying eye,
And, 'mid angels' songs ascending,
Hearest every mourner's cry.

In the days of worldly gladness,
Cold and proud our hearts may be,
But to whom, in fear and sadness,
Can we go but unto Thee?
From that depth of gloom and sorrow
Where thy love to man was shown,
Every bleeding heart may borrow
Hope and strength to bear its own.

Though the cup I drink be bitter,
Yet since Thou hast made it mine,
This Thy love will make it sweeter
Than the world's best mingled wine.
Darker days may yet betide me,
Sharper sorrows I may prove;
But the worst will ne'er divide me,
O my Saviour! from Thy love.

XXI.

RECOVERY FROM SICKNESS.

How pleasant, after days of pain,
And nights retreating slow,
To feel the genial air again
Breathe freshly on the brow!
How sweet to leave the darkened room
For open earth and sky,
And feel the sunlight and the bloom
Revive the languid eye!

With lovelier tints each little flower
That stars the hedge is clad,
And every bird has sweeter power
To make the spirit glad.
Our pulses beat to Nature's chime,—
We see the golden glow
That was about us in the time
Of childhood, long ago.

Joy comes in trances like the wind,—
And in the after-calm,
The heart interprets to the mind
Creation's choral psalm;
We hear it, and we swell the song
With love's harmonious breath,—
Adoring Him to whom belong
The issues out of death.

More fervent thoughts the spirit thrill,
When words are sealed or slow;
The current of its bliss is still,
But deep and swift of flow:
For solemn is the joy that springs
From undeservèd good,
And holy meekness ever clings
To holy gratitude.

Oh, if to sick and weary hearts
Such joy on earth be given,
What is it when the saint departs
To breathe the air of Heaven!
When from Earth's narrowness and gloom
Gone out, with dazzled eyes
He stands within its light and bloom,—
The heir of Paradise!

XXII.

MEMORIAL LINES.

I KNOW thy God hath given thee sweet releasing
From the great woe thy gentle spirit bore,
Yet in the heart still throbs the thought unceasing,—
Beloved! thou wilt come to us no more.
No more! although we feel thy sainted vision,
The while we speak of thee, is lingering near,
And know that, in the bliss of thy transition,
Thou still rememberest us who mourn thee here.

We loved, and still we love thee. What can sever
This holy bond? The spirit is not dust;
Sweet is thy memory in the soul for ever,
And fondly guarded as a sacred trust.
Dear was thy living image when before us
It stood in all thy youthful beauty's glow,
Yet still more dear thy spirit hovering o'er us
With the bright crown of glory on its brow.

How oft the weary heart, its grief dissembling,
Sees the calm smile upon thy features still,
And hears along its chords, like music trembling,
The low clear tones to which it once would thrill!
The vision fades,—we feel we are forsaken,
The gloom returns, the anguish and the care,—
And tender longings in the heart awaken,
Which wish thee here, though thou art happier there.

Alas! how far the Past outweighs the Present,—
The forms that come no more the friends we see!
How the lone spirit feels 'tis far less pleasant
To smile with others than to weep for thee!
Yet, in the struggle of its silent sorrow,
The pining heart can sometimes break its chain,
And from the Saviour's word this hope may borrow,—
Beloved! we shall see thee yet again.

XXIII.

THE BETTER HOPE.

O NEVER shall the weary rest,
Nor joy to drooping hearts be given,
Till, like a vision pure and blest,
Upon them hope has dawned from Heaven.
In Earth's cold soil no balm may grow
To cure the deepest wounds we feel;
The world moves onwards with its woe,
And mocks the grief it cannot heal.

No bliss unfading walks the earth
Which is not native to the sky;
The power must be of heavenly birth
Which gives us peace that will not die:
Then, only then, our spirits greet
A hope immortally their own,—
When, at the Saviour's gentle feet,
They lay their every burden down.

In Him, through all the storms, and strife,
And weariness of time they rest;
This hope, the anchor of their life,
Which keeps them safe, and makes them blest.
To Him, and to His cross, it clings
With sacred constancy and true;
And to the trustful heart it brings
Not only peace but pureness too.

Unquenched is still that guiding star
Which shone of old in eastern skies;
Still, all that follow from afar
It leads to where the Saviour lies;
There, only there, the weary rest,
And joy to sorrowing hearts is given,—
There, hope immortal fills the breast,
And all around gleams light from Heaven!

XXIV.

Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, ... but unto mount Sion, the city of the living God."—HEB. xii. 18, 22.

NOT, Lord! unto that mount of dread
Thou bidst thy people gather now,
With clouds and darkness overspread,
And fiery splendour round its brow;
But unto Sion, where Thy grace
Rejoicing o'er Thy works is seen,
And all Thy glory in the face
Of Christ the Saviour shines serene.

Not by the trumpet's stormy blast,
Thou bidst the hushed assembly hear
Those words which in the thunder passed,
And filled the holiest heart with fear;
But, in the still small voice which steals
From the great glory where Thou art,
Thy mercy tells of One who heals
The anguish of the wounded heart.

O let that voice of heavenly power
The movement of my spirit sway,—
Thy presence in each darker hour
Sustain my hope and guide my way!
That I may go from strength to strength
In an ascending course to Thee,
Till in Thine own pure light at length
The perfectness of light I see.

XXV.

GOD IS LOVE.

Thou, Lord, art Love, and everywhere
Thy name is brightly shown;
Beneath, on earth Thy footstool fair,
Above, on heaven Thy throne.

Thy word is love, in lines of gold
There mercy prints its trace;
In Nature we thy steps behold,
The Gospel shows thy face.

Thy ways are love, though they transcend
Our feeble range of sight;
They wind through darkness to their end
In everlasting light.

Thy thoughts are love, and Jesus is
The living voice they find;
His love lights up the vast abyss
Of the eternal mind.

Thy chastisements are love,—more deep
They stamp the seal divine,
And, by a sweet compulsion, keep
Our spirits nearer Thine.

Thy heaven is the abode of love;
O blessèd Lord! that we
May there, when Time's dim shades remove,
Be gathered home to Thee.

There, with Thy resting saints, to fall
Adoring round the throne,
When all shall love thee, Lord, and all
Shall in thy love be one!

XXVI.

TO A FRIEND DEPARTED.

THE memory of thy truth to me
My heart will ne'er resign,
Until, beloved! mine shall be
As cold a bed as thine.
High o'er my path of life it will
Hang ever as a star,
To cheer my steps toward the hill
Where the immortal are.

The lesson of thy gentle life,
Thy trials meekly borne,
Will keep me hopeful in the strife
When fainting and out-worn;
Then, for a darker hour remains
The memory of the faith
That triumphed over mortal pains,
And calmly fronted death.

I once had hoped that side by side
Our journey we might go,
And with a perfect love divide
Our gladness and our woe;
But thou hast reached thy Father's home,
And happier thou art there
Than I, left wearily to roam
Through days of grief and care.

Though all is changed since thou art gone,
I would not wish thee here,
Far rather would I weep alone
Than see thee shed a tear;—
The thought of thy great happiness
Is now a part of mine;
Nor would I wish my sorrow less
To see that sorrow thine.

XXVII.

VIA DOLOROSA.

My feet lightly stepped on the highway,
  Youth ran with a thrill in my blood,
And my thoughts were in tune with the voices
  That rung out of thicket and wood.

The blithe birds were my companions,
  They fluttered from tree to tree,
Alluring me on with sweet music
  That awoke sweeter echoes in me.

But I suddenly turned down a by-way
  With briars and mosses o'ergrown,
And they shrunk from its threatening shadows,
  And left me to journey alone.

With a sorrowful heart I went onward,
  And a darkness fell on the day,
When one, in attire like a pilgrim,
  Appeared by my side on the way.

His face had the sternness of sorrow,
For a time he spoke not a word,
And then, turning round, spoke abruptly
In a speech I never had heard.

I answered him not, but his language
Awoke many thoughts in my mind,
And the cloud seemed to pass from his features,
And his speech was more gentle and kind.

And slowly my soul understood him,
I may not reveal what he said,
But it seemed, as we walked, the rough by-way
Grew pleasant and soft to my tread.

He vanished, but left a remembrance
Which brightened the desolate place,—
And I knew, by the light on his features,
I had looked on an Angel's face.

XXVIII.

FAITH, HOPE, AND LOVE AT THE SEPULCHRE.*

"He is not here," Love saith, while down her face
Slowly the large tears of her trouble flow;
"They've borne Him hence, and whither who may know?"
Then straightway Faith and Hope, with rapid pace,
Came running toward the tomb,—a holy race:
And Faith did outrun Hope, and stooping low
Saw the sweet-smelling cerements, pure as snow,
Each calmly folded in its proper place,
But on the threshold lingered. Hope, not grieved
At his defeat, soon followed, nor delayed
To enter in, and presently was cheered;
Faith also entered with him, and believed.
Then homewards both returned. Love meanwhile stayed,
And wept and waited till the Lord appeared.

* The subject of this Sonnet must have been, unconsciously, suggested by a remembrance of some stanzas in Keble's "Christian Year;" the triad there personified being Reason, Faith, and Love.

XXIX.

"I am a stranger with Thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were."—PSALM xxxix. 12.

Peregrinis in terris nulla est jucundior recordatio quam suae civitatis.—AUGUSTINE.

THOUGH long the wanderer may depart,
And far his footsteps roam,
He clasps the closer to his heart
The image of his home.
To that loved land, where'er he goes,
His tenderest thoughts are cast,
And dearer still through absence grows
The memory of the past.

Though Nature on another shore
Her softest smile may wear,
The vales, the hills, he loved before
To him are far more fair.
The heavens that met his childhood's eye,
All clouded though they be,
Seem brighter than the sunniest sky
Of climes beyond the sea.

So Faith, a stranger on the earth,
Still turns its eye above;
The child of an immortal birth
Seeks more than mortal love.
The scenes of earth, though very fair,
Want home's endearing spell;
And all his heart and hope are where
His God and Saviour dwell.

He may behold them dimly here,
And see them as not nigh,
But all he loves shall yet appear
Unclouded to his eye.
To that fair City, now so far,
Rejoicing he shall come;—
A better light than Bethlehem's star
Guides every wanderer home.

Paradise, and groves
Elysian, Fortunate Fields, like those of old
Sought in the Atlantic Main, why should they be
A history only of departed things,
Or a mere fiction of what never was?
For the discerning intellect of Man,
When wedded to this goodly universe
In love and holy passion, shall find these
A simple produce of the common day.

WORDSWORTH.

ATLANTIS.

Part First.

I.

The wind that through the blue air blows unspent,
Bears thee, O ship! to some far shore in pride;
Thy stately beauty charms the element
Wherein, with swanlike motion, thou dost glide;
The quick waves gleam around thee, and the wide
Bare ocean glitters whither thou wilt go;
Checked to the gentlest pressure of thy guide,
Thy giant strength is shifted to and fro,
And soon shall thrill to feel the steady trade-wind blow.

II.

Southward thou through the waves wilt scoop thy path,
Whether in sultry quietness they sleep,

Or fiercely trample round thee in their wrath,
When the storm crashes from its cloudy steep;
Thou knowest all the secrets of the deep,
And through her provinces art free to steer;
As the lone eagle floats in the wide sweep
Of his aërial realm, thou on thy clear
And level way dost move, unconscious of a fear.

III.

Yet free and fearless as thou sweepest on,
These smiling seas in awful silence lay,
Unfurrowed by a keel, through ages gone;
Man's track is but a thing of yesterday
To periods vast and dim, that stretch away
Into the hoary past, when, still outspread
As now, these bounds were guarded by the sway
Of old traditions, and a sacred dread,
And manifold wild dreams which Pagan fancy bred.

IV.

These limits to the elder world were haunted
By visionary forms; their misty bound
Shut in a region, sunny and enchanted,
That was Imagination's holy ground;
And bright-eyed Fantasy the place had crowned

With the rich purple splendour of her dreams;—
There all immortal loveliness she found,
The rippling light of golden-sanded streams,
And azure skies suffused with amethystine gleams.

V.

Here seas in slumber clasped the happy isles,
Which, to the old Ionian's trancèd eyes,
Unveiled their bloom of beauty * in the smiles
Of an unwithering summer; where the sighs
Of fragrant west winds ever softly rise,
And creep through groves in cloudy foliage drest,
And sounds of unimagined melodies
Float through the crystal air, and witch the rest
There kept for souls assoiled, the spirits of the blest.

VI.

What though the portal of one sense was barred,
When on the mind such visions crowded fast,
And Nature's blank vacuity was starred
With lights so beautiful, and gleams that cast
The flush of all Elysium, as they passed;
When chiefs and sages of an earlier time,
Whose names immortal as his song shall last,
Smiled on their bard from that unfading clime,
Each wearing, as of old, the beauty of his prime.

* Note 1.

VII.

Fair visions these, which by the Poet's art
Were glorified, but not less deeply shrined
Among the old traditions of the heart;
His voice interpreted the thoughts that find
An instant echo in the general mind,
And clothed its fancies with material grace,
Gave it a pledge, it had not vainly pined
For the enjoyment of some happier place,
Where sorrow comes no more, nor leaves its withering trace.

VIII.

There are undying thoughts which, as the flesh
Clings to the living spirit, will entwine
Their links in many a strong and subtle mesh
About our mortal being; which refine
And dignify a nature once divine,
Though now far sunken from its high estate;
Longings which search through nature for a sign
That Life is not the sport of wayward fate,—
That Man will not be left for ever desolate.

IX.

Hence the heart wooed the distant and the dim,
And, passing forth from Man's familiar sphere,

Sought tranquil seats beyond the vague blue rim
Of Ocean;* found a sanctuary there
From the anxieties that blight and sear
Its best affections, refuge from the strife,
And wrong, and wretchedness that round it were,—
A haven sheltered from the storms so rife
Upon the open seas of this uncertain life.

X.

The Present is made for us,—stern and cold
It stands in mask of iron; the Remote,
Fluent and formless, runs in every mould
In which the busy spirit shapes its thought.
The fair Ideal we have vainly sought
Through life we there behold reflected plain;
Its elements we colour as they float
With our emotions,—in a bright domain
The mind there roams at large, escaping from its chain.

XI.

So pilgrims, faring on through deserts bare,
Still think that from each far and quivering hill
They will behold green fields and valleys fair:
There lies the smiling region where the rill
Freshens the air, and crystal waters fill

* Note 2.

The well that gushes up the reeds among;
So, weaving pleasant fancies at their will,
They strive to banish, as they toil along,
The dull realities that round about them throng.

XII.

It might be in the times when Tyre sent forth
Her stately argosies to every shore,
From rich Sofala to the stormy north,—
Some galley, as from Britain south she bore,
Deep-freighted from her mines with massy ore,
Had, struck by tempest, from the neighbouring coast
Been driven far out to sea; and labouring sore,
With shattered rudder, many days been tossed,
And many a starless night, through seas till then
uncrossed.

XIII.

Not yet by man in brazen ring was swung
That needle to the pole-star trembling true,
Wherewith its secret from the deep he wrung;
So for an instant doom the hapless crew
Stood ready, when a watery sun-gleam threw
A brightness where a steadfast cloud appeared,
And presently the peaks of mountains blue
Loomed through the mist, and sinking hearts were
cheered,
And for that welcome strand right joyously they steered.

XIV.

But when the clear prevailing light had cloven
The loaded air, and fast as April snows
Dissolved those coils of vapours interwoven
That swathed the hills, how fair a vision rose
Before their aching eyes,—the soft repose
Of sunshine on the umbrage of the woods:
How sweet to woo each balmy wind that blows,
To feel the unutterable charm that broods
O'er Nature's ancient haunts and sacred solitudes!

XV.

Clear brooks ran down through laurel-shaded coves,
From out an unpruned wilderness of bloom;
The warm air over aromatic groves
Was tingling, stifled with the sweet perfume,—
And golden fruits were hanging in the gloom
Of thickets,—flowers looped up in gorgeous braids
From branch to branch,—and palms of emerald plume,
And cypress-spires towered over sunny glades,—
And many a silvered stem glanced dim up far arcades.

XVI.

Was not a sound heard in the sultry noon,
Save the waves washing dull in many a bay,—

The flow of Ocean, in its drowsy swoon,
Round many a wooded steep and headland gray;
And well that murmur with the sleep that lay
On mount and forest blended; far and wide
Spread Nature's wild, magnificent array,
Now first unveiling, like an Indian bride
In festive splendour decked, and rich barbaric pride.

XVII.

A place—an hour— in which the mind receives
A sense of grandeur all unknown before,—
The impression of a joy which never leaves
The heart, and, quickening, thrills it to the core;
And when the wanderers left this charmèd shore,
They deemed that they had looked upon a scene
Shut out from mortal sight from evermore,—
In trance beheld the impenetrable screen
That girdled Eden round with walls of living green.

XVIII.

Their joy was tempered by a sacred awe
That checked presumption; hence there went abroad
The rumour from Phoenicia, that they saw
In these far seas a faëry isle* that glowed

* Note 3.

With beauty not of earth,—that Heaven bestowed,
In gracious sympathy with their distress,
A vision of the deep retired abode
Of happy spirits, the serene recess
Where endless years flow on in peace and pleasantness.

XIX.

A fable it might be,—but fables speak
The heart's embodied longings, and it clings,
When reft of better guidance, worn and weak,
To every hollow oracle that brings
Its semblance, as the vine will clasp its rings
And tendrils round the dead or living bough;
Toward each far-seen, beckoning hope it springs,
And holds it fast, if haply it may show
Some antidote for ill, some healing balm for woe.

XX.

Man cannot crush the instincts of the soul
Still pining for expansion large and free,
And striving to maintain their just control
Over the spirit; so if aught there be
That seems an echo from Eternity,
He hails it,* though it sounds but to deceive;—

* Note 4.

The ship, nigh foundering in the Arctic Sea,
Will grapple to the iceberg, and we cleave
To every desperate hope that our sick fancies weave.

XXI.

Nor let us, fallen on better days, condemn
The faith, too credulous, of antique ages;—
Our light and truth were not sent forth to them
From the uncurtained shrine,—those sacred pages,
Whence the immortal voice of saints and sages
Speaks to all time, were hidden from their view,—
And for the living water which assuages
Our thirst, they, far from Heaven's descending dew,
Digged many a desert well, and brackish water drew.

XXII.

Oh, sore must be the struggle and the strife
The while the weary heart thus seeks to earn
Some higher strength to bear the load of life!
They strained their faltering vision to discern
Some heavenly sign that what they fain would learn
Would be revealed,—but fruitlessly they hoped;
With doubts and mysteries, whose voices stern
Rung through the world's great void, they feebly coped,
And through the thickening gloom their darksome journey groped.

XXIII.

Amid Life's myriad fleeting forms to clasp
Some certain truth,—the heart's substantial gain,
To find some hope that would not cheat the grasp,—
To break from dull dead Custom's heavy chain
Which rusts into the spirit, and attain
To freedom from the world's degrading coil,—
Some nobler spirits strove, but strove in vain;
Their strength was wasted on a barren soil,
No rich enduring good e'er cheered their lifelong toil.

XXIV.

As one, who, by the Sacramento's stream,
Day after day his search for treasure plies,
His hot brain fevered with a golden dream,
And scoops the sand, and bends with eager eyes
Above it, raking for the glittering prize,
But still, with bitter disappointment curst,
No grain before his throbbing vision lies,—
So madly toils with never-sated thirst,
Until too late he sees the shining bubble burst.

XXV.

For never can the anxious heart rejoice
In firm assurance of a truth possest,

Till Heaven break silence, and its solemn voice
Awake an answering echo in the breast;
One hand alone can lead it into rest,
In every doubt an all-sufficient stay,—
And every guide whom, in its ceaseless quest,
It follows, tempts its footsteps far astray
Into a howling waste, wherein it finds no way.

Part Second.

I.

Fair art thou, Island of the Southern Sea!
Which in these later years to me hast been
The home my native land may never be;
An undeparting spring-time smiles serene
Along thy shores; thy hills and valleys green
With Nature's sweetest affluence are crowned;
And if the mind some soft enchanting scene
Would image, it might roam the earth around
And find no lovelier vision in its ample bound.

II.

They called thee in the old time Isle of Groves,
Lifting thy cloud of forests from the deep; *
And fair are still thy woody mountain coves,
The verdurous gloom of inland gorge and steep,
Where ancient silence loves a shrine to keep
Inviolate; fair thy leafy coverts calm,
Whereon the sultry sunlight loves to sleep,—
Where, waving languidly its fronds, the palm
O'erhangs the citron groves, and thickets breathing balm.

* Note 5.

III.

Yet a mysterious grandeur, all thine own,
With this bewitching grace is reconciled
And blended, where, upon her rocky throne,
Mists surging round, and cloud on cloud high-piled
Above, sits Majesty, and looks o'er wild
Volcanic hollows, ridges shagged with wood,
And rugged chasms where moonlight never smiled,
Where chafes the torrent in its channel rude,
And with a far-heard murmur fills the solitude.

IV.

But let the vapours leave thy flinty peaks,
And melt in ether like a cloud of dew,
Whether at even, when sunset's mellow streaks
Flush their dark summits with a purple hue,
Or when in morning's sky of stainless blue
They rise so delicately sharp and clear,
And all is gentlest beauty to the view,—
Veiled with a shadowy brightness, they appear
Forms of the element to earth descending near.

V.

It breathes around us, this ethereal charm,
This blandness, native unto climes like thine,

The sweetly-tingling spirit of this warm
And golden air, and deep-blue skies that shine,
A luminous dome based on the quivering line
Of Ocean, overvaulting the expanse
Of mount and dale, slopes dusky with the vine,
Cornfield and woodland which delight the glance,
With rich and waving breadths of green luxuriance.

VI.

Dark frown thy cliffs of bronze along the verge
Of ocean,—walls of adamant, they show
A calm embattled front to the loud surge,
And shatter back its foam in flakes of snow:
There towers thy Mountain Cape,—his swarthy brow
The mist swathes like a turban,—the deep roar
Of breaking surf comes muffled from below,—
And, on his watch, he listens evermore
To waves that wail along the solitary shore.

VII.

And round thee stretch the illimitable seas,
Fair, whether glassed in calmness broad and bright,
Or ruffling into darkness with the breeze,—
A glorious symbol of the Infinite,
That thrills the spirit with a deep delight,
Or sways it with as deep mysterious dread,

As now, when looking forth upon the night
I see the cold, dim gleam the stars have shed
On those grey weltering waves, in loneliness outspread.

VIII.

And here and there white pools of moonshine lie
Upon the tremulous waters, strangely blent
With the deep shadows of a chequered sky;
While high in heaven, the Moon in her ascent
Has purified the clear blue element
From clouds; and underneath that sparkling chain
Of stars, a fleece of wandering vapours rent
On the pure darkness casts a fleeting stain,
And melts into the air in warm and murmuring rain.

IX.

Up the soft vagueness of that wavering air
Some fascination lures the eye to gaze,
As if these stars so calmly shining there
Were mystic ciphers traced by Him who sways
Our mortal destiny, and shapes our ways;
As if the mind, more spiritual and free,
Its thoughts a while above itself could raise,
And apprehend more clearly things that be
Hid in the tranquil depth of His Eternity.

X.

The radiance flecks the hills and groves around
With ebon shadow,—like a mist it falls
On the steep city, and its castled mound,
And dwellings scattered up the slopes, whose walls
Glance through embowering trees at intervals,
And convent domes whose burnished sheathing glows
With pale star-fire; the peaceful scene recals
Some old Arabian dream, and overflows
With a delicious charm of languor and repose.

XI.

A blooming Isle—a clime beloved of Heaven
And far secreted in the ocean-tide,
As if to some more favoured people given,
Where in a safe retreat they might abide,
And years of innocence might calmly glide
Away, in scenes by peace and freedom blest.
For such a spot the war-worn Roman sighed,
Where he might live forgotten and at rest,*
Shut out from every care that might his life molest.

XII.

Yet as a seeming joy will sometimes wreathe
The pliant features with a hollow smile,

* Note 6.

While care is fretting restlessly beneath,
So Nature's face the fancy may beguile;
A blight is on thy beauty, summer Isle!
Who but would mourn thy people's sad estate,
So blest, and yet so sunken and so vile,
Slaves of a creed beneath whose deadening weight
All genial aims of life lie crushed and desolate?

XIII.

Not theirs the faith which to the heart appeals,
And makes it love all things that lovely be;
Not theirs the bearing of the man who feels
His soul immortal, and his conscience free;
Though at the name of Christ they bend the knee,
From them is sealed the holy Book of God,
Man's birthright and his charter; and we see
Rome's branded vassal kiss her iron rod,
And crouch to the proud power that on his soul hath trod.

XIV.

Thus abject ignorance and slavish gloom
The native honour of the soul deface,—
The immortal spirit pines amid the bloom
And beauty of its earthly dwelling-place;
Man's mighty ruin mocks the living grace
Of Nature; like some pile, once fair and grand,

Now scathed and riven by lightning to its base,
Whose crumbling towers and wind-worn arches stand
More wildly desolate amidst a smiling land.

XV.

And now, ill-fated Isle! upon thee lies
A guilt that may perchance be unforgiven,
That madly thou hast turned away thine eyes
From the clear light that sometime shone from Heaven,—
Against thy proper good hast blindly striven,—
Thy noblest children, who stood forth to brave
Thy frenzy, from thy bosom thou hast driven,*
To nurse a drooping hope beyond the wave,
And on some alien shore to find an exile's grave.

XVI.

Thy Church, to sanctify the deed of shame,
Baptized it holy zeal, but blackest guilt
May stalk abroad beneath the fairest name;
Yet be it, lordly Priestcraft! as thou wilt,—
It is a hollow fabric that is built
On falsehood, proudly though awhile it tower;
The captive's groan, the martyr's life-blood spilt,
Cry out with instant voices for the hour
Which shall behold the fall of thy detested power.

* Note 7.

XVII.

Thy rulers, hapless Nation! in the praise
Of Freedom can speak speciously and well,
But from such lips as theirs the stately phrase
Rings false and hollow as a juggling spell;
For when could sacred Freedom ever dwell
Where Conscience cringes to a priestly guide?
Let the long struggle of the nations tell
How oft the heavenly flower has drooped and died
Beneath the blasting tree that shadows Tiber's tide.

XVIII.

No! Man must learn that from the free-born soul
The insufferable yoke must first be thrown,
Which would its deathless powers and hopes control;
In the mind's inner region he must own
No lord, no master, but his God alone,
Ere in his outward life the ennobling sense
And princely might of Freedom can be known,
And, with a princely largesse, can dispense
Those peerless gifts which are Life's beauty and defence.

XIX.

Such liberty, my native land! is thine,—
Thy hills rise blue before me o'er the wave,

And my heart proudly beats to call thee mine;
Though here, an exile, not by choice, I crave
A dwelling from the stranger, and a grave
May find, not distant, in an alien clime,
The thought, 'twas thou that being to me gave,
Which with ingenuous gladness filled my prime,
Hath blessed with holier joy these years of adverse time.

XX.

Wild are thy shores, and with a rugged zone
Hath nature girt thee, nor thine aspect vies
With the soft beauty which I look upon;
Ungentle is thy clime, austere thy skies,
Nor purple with the vine thy hills arise,
Nor sweet with myrtle; yet has Heaven bestowed
Blessings on thee no sensuous charm supplies,—
Made thee of old Religion's calm abode,
The consecrated shrine where Freedom's lamp hath glowed.

XXI.

Exalted memories throw around thy hills
And vales a charm which ever shall endure,
And many a sacred thought the spirit thrills
In the grey glen, or on the upland moor,
Where from his fern-veiled cave or cottage door

Was dragged the high-souled peasant to his death,
When, witness for his simple faith and pure,
He knelt untroubled on his native heath,
And for his murderers breathed in prayer his latest breath.

XXII.

Nor yet is that impassioned fervour gone
Which rose to such heroic heights of old;
It lives, a shaping influence, which has thrown
Thy native virtue into nobler mould,
And stamped thy manly bearing firm and bold,—
Thy household thoughts and speech to loftier mood
This generous force hath lifted, and controlled
Thy being, to its deepest core imbued
With reverence for all pure, severer types of good.

XXIII.

Upon this broad and firm foundation based,
The eminent temple of thy Freedom stands,
Still in its chaste proportions undefaced;
Religion swayed the hearts and nerved the hands
That slowly reared that glory of the lands,
And thence its stateliness and strength have sprung;
Beholding it from far my soul expands,—
I see a magic light around thee flung,
Which never was on those fair isles whereof I sung.

XXIV.

This spiritual gleam hath beautified
Thy wilder scenes for ever to the mind,
As the selected region where abide
Life's choicest blessings; where the ties that bind
Our human hearts in love and concord kind
Preserve a holy strength; where virtues mild,
And sweetest charities and hopes, are shrined,—
Truth, meek-eyed Peace, Religion's gentle child,
With vestal Purity, and Honour undefiled.

XXV.

Where Man lies blighted, Nature blooms no more,—
Where the dull spirit's eye reflects no glow,
What charm in gorgeous lights on sea and shore?
Therefore to me the lovelier art thou,
My country! this clear glory on thy brow,
These blessings showered upon thee from above;
And, such experience gained, I love thee now
With a far deeper and more thoughtful love
Than might in earlier days the unheeding spirit move.

XXVI.

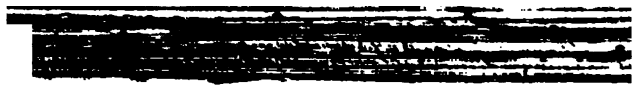
Be this the spirit of my ending strain,—
These solitary musings let me raise

To prayer, that strength be given thee to maintain
Unsoiled that Christian faith which was thy praise
Of old; to stand upon the good old ways
Which led thy youth to fame; to guard the wise
And pure traditions of thine earlier days,
But chief that sacred Law, wherein there lies
The bulwark and the pledge of thy great liberties.

XXVII.

So that thou never from this covenant swerve,
That hand which hath exalted thee so long
Shall keep thee high in honour, and preserve
Thy coasts inviolate from assault of wrong;
Then happier than the fabled isles of song
The nations shall behold thee, and confess
Heaven's favour makes thy sea-girt border strong,
And on, through brightening ages, it shall bless
Thy bounds with golden years and fruitful quietness.

NOTES TO ATLANTIS.



NOTES TO ATLANTIS.

(1.)—Part I. Stanza V.

The happy isles,
Which, to the old Ionian's trancèd eyes,
Unveiled their bloom of beauty.

The Atlantides, Hesperides, or Fortunate Islands, placed by the Greek poets in the Western Ocean, at the farthest limits of the earth, are described by Homer in the fourth book of the Odyssey:—

"Stern winter smiles on that auspicious clime,
The fields are florid with unfading prime;
From the bleak pole no winds inclement blow,
Mould the round hail, or flake the fleecy snow;
But from the breezy deep the blest inhale
The fragrant murmurs of the western gale."

The spirit of the old classic legends has been finely caught by Milton in the exquisite descriptive lines which he puts into the mouth of the Spirit in his Comus:—

"To the ocean now I fly,
And those happy climes that lie
Where day never shuts his eye,
Up in the broad fields of the sky;

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which in that case must have been discovered by some Phœnician Columbus. The author of a curious old work, entitled *Speculum Mundi, or, A Glasse representing the Face of the World*, says:—"I think it may be supposed that America was sometime part of that great land which Plato calleth the Atlantick Island, and that the kings of that island had some intercourse between the people of Europe and Africa. But when it happened that this island became a sea, time wore out the remembrance of remote countreys; and that upon this occasion, namely, by reason of the mud, and dirt, and other rubbish of the island. For when it sank, it became a sea, which at the first was full of mud; and thereupon could not be sailed until a long time after; yea, so long that such as were the seamen in those dayes were either dead before the sea came to be clear again, or else sunk with the island; the residue, being little expert in the art of navigation, might, as necessitie taught them, sail in some certain boats from island to island; but not venturing further, their memorie perished. And not onely so, but also thus: this island sinking, might so damm up the sea, that neither those that were in these parts did ever attempt to seek any land that wayes to the westwards, nor yet those that were remaining upon that part of the island that did not sink, would ever attempt to seek any land unto the eastwards, and so the one forgot the other."—Cambridge, 1643.

The Portuguese Jesuit, Pad. Antonio Cordeyra, in his *Hist. Insul. Lusit.*, Lisbon, 1717, has expended much remarkable erudition and scholastic subtilty on the discussion of this visionary topic, and considers the opinion of the existence of any such island a pestilent heresy. According to Plato, the

ıs of Atlantis conquered Spain, and, as quoted
ırded it over a great part of that country
ande parte della). The Jesuit's patriotism
ɜd by this careless remark, and his answer is
—"This statement is an evident falsehood,
he most ancient and general histories of the
ɔarticular those of Spain, we are acquainted
ngs who were in it from the flood of Noah
and of none of them does any author relate,
dreamed it, that he was conquered by the
Atlantis, nor that any of them had wars with
o that the chimerical Atlantis of Plato is only
not true." That this statement of a certain
ledge of all the kings who reigned in Spain
f the Flood, is not a mere rhetorical flourish,
diately proceeds to show by giving a catalogue
ıtering into copious details of the events that
: their reigns. The first king of that Catholic
al, the fifth son of Japheth, and grandson of
ɜ born in Armenia, and set out on a voyage of
gh the Mediterranean, which he navigated till
the straits of Gibraltar into the ocean. Not
ırdeyra suggests, to run the risk of another
ıed to the right, coasting along till he came to
river, where he landed, and founded the city
the city of Tubal. This is now Setubal, a
ı and harbour, six leagues from the royal city
ıis event happened 145 years after the Flood
ɔ. 2161. Tubal reigned 155 years, and died
· the Flood. He was buried on the lofty pro-

montory afterwards called Cape St. Vincent, "having always," in the concise eulogium of his biographer, "observed Nature's law of one only God, and the Hebrew tongue, and leaving a great part of Spain peopled, especially the place of his original settlement, known in after times as Lusitania."

The giant Nembroth, it would appear, was troublesome in Spain in those days. He was the grandson of Ham, and probably finding Africa lonely, crossed the Straits, and gave his name to the river Ebro. The fourteenth king of Spain, in direct line from Tubal, was Hesperus. He had a brother, Atlante, who came from Italy, and invaded the dominions of Hesperus. Assisted by the Portuguese, the invader fought various battles, and finally vanquished Hesperus, and drove him from Spain. Such, according to Cordeyra, is the historic enucleation of the Platonic myth. The Atlantic Island was Italy, the king was Atlante, and the strange people were his Italian forces, and Portuguese allies. Out of the single name, Atlante, the magical web of Egyptian and Greek romance was spun.

(3.)—STANZA XVIII.

There went abroad
The rumour from Phœnicia, that they saw
In these far seas a faëry isle.

It seems now to be generally admitted that the discoveries of those early and enterprising navigators, the Phœnicians, were the nucleus of the myths of Atlas, the

Islands of the Blessed, and the Gardens of the Hesperides, which were so richly embellished by the poetic fancies of the Greeks. Humboldt, in a note on Mount Atlas, in his *Ansichten der Natur*, has inserted a communication from Professor Ideler, whose authority he considers decisive. According to him, the Phœnicians had visited, among other regions, "the Archipelago of the Canary Isles, where their attention was arrested by the Peak of Teneriffe." He proceeds to say, "Through their colonies established in Greece, especially under Cadmus in Bœotia, the Greeks were made acquainted with the existence of this mountain, which soared high above the region of clouds, and with the 'Fortunate Islands,' on which this mountain was situated, and which were adorned with fruits of all kinds, and particularly with the golden orange. By the transmission of this tradition through the songs of the bards, Homer became acquainted with these remote regions, and he speaks of an Atlas to whom all the depths of ocean are known, and who bears upon his shoulders the great columns which separate from one another the heavens and the earth, and of the *Elysian Plains*, described as a wondrously beautiful land in the west."

The conclusion to which the learned Professor comes, and in which the encyclopædic Humboldt implicitly acquiesces, is, that "the Atlas of Homer and Hesiod can be none other than the Peak of Teneriffe, while the Atlas of Greek and Roman geographers must be sought in the north of Africa." This much-vexed question may therefore be considered as set at rest.

(4.)—Stanza XX.

If aught there be
That seems an echo from Eternity,
He hails it.

Those legends which told of remote islands in the ocean, peopled at some distant period by innocent and happy races, however worthless they may be in point of substantive historic truth, possess a deep significance of another kind. They are valuable as showing that retrospective tendency of the mind, which stands out so prominent in the religious faith of antiquity. Traditions may be mere floating leaves, but they are leaves inscribed with sibylline characters, and borne on a strong current. They mark in what direction the tides of human feeling and thought were setting, during periods of which little more can be known. They show how the fancies, and desires, and sorrowful remembrances of men were, amidst the darkness of heathenism, reaching restlessly back to a time of innocence that was gone. The world's golden age was never in the present. It lay far away in the past, and man could only stretch forth his hands as to a heritage of happiness and peace which he had lost for ever. A rude coin, struck in a forgotten mint, and turned up by the ploughshare, may throw light on some grand movement of nations or armies; and these dim-featured myths, like medals dropped by ancient generations on their mysterious march, often show, through the green mould which covers them, the stamp of some half-defaced but kingly thought. Their uncouth and faded

ciphering may stand for some truth, which is not for one time or another, but lives, as the short motto of a long experience, in the language of the universal heart. May they not be regarded as fragments of original tradition, borne away by the scattered races of mankind, when the bond of their primeval unity was broken,—relics of an earlier faith, which were afterwards embedded like fossils in the superstitions which encrusted them? In Cudworth's vast work, which may be called a *limbus philosophorum*, one seems to see in Orphic hymns, Chaldaic oracles, and the liturgies of Persian fire-worship (the symbol to the Magi of the hidden God, or Mithras, father and maker of all things), the shadowy outlines of a religion older than all of them, looking out upon him through the mists of ages. In this sense we might venture to apply Wordsworth's fine lines in his "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," descriptive of the experience of the individual mind, to the larger consciousness of the world, as it receded from the happier days of its childhood:—

"Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing Boy,
But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The Youth, who daily farther from the East
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended.
At length the Man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

These undefined impressions again gave birth to a vague yearning or expectation—it cannot be called a belief—that

man's lost inheritance would be one day restored. To such faltering utterances of a better hope, a recent writer has given the name of the "Unconscious Prophecies of Heathendom." See Trench's *Hulsean Lectures for* 1846.

The philosophic importance of Presentiment, as a fact (be the explanation what it may) in man's spiritual nature, is more than hinted at in the remarkable words of Shakspeare :—

"The prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."

In this outlying region of thought, this dim borderground, or "debateable land," between the realms of fable and reality, which has been so imperfectly surveyed, we come with wonder on this solitary and gigantic footprint left there so long ago.

(5.)—PART II. STANZA II.

They called thee in the old time Isle of Groves,
Lifting thy cloud of forests from the deep.

The name Madeira, which means wood in Portuguese, was given to the island by the discoverers, from the forests with which it was covered to the summit. In order to clear the ground for their first settlements, the colonists set fire at various points to this jungle. According to early chroniclers, this fire burnt for six months; and this is the reason popularly assigned for so few singing birds being found in the island.

(6.)—Stanza XI.

For such a spot the war-worn Roman sighed,
Where he might live forgotten and at rest.

This is related of Sertorius in his life by Plutarch. The story he has preserved is, that when the veteran soldier was at Bœtica in Spain, he conversed with some mariners who had lately arrived from the Atlantic Islands. These, says the historian, are two in number, separated only by a narrow channel, and are at the distance of 400 leagues from the African coast. They are called the Fortunate Islands. Rain seldom falls there,—there are soft breezes and rich dews. The inhabitants live in enjoyment and ease. The air is always pleasant and salubrious, through the happy temperature of the seasons, and their insensible transition into each other. There is a refreshing moisture diffused by the mild south winds from the sea. Sertorius, hearing those wonderful accounts, conceived a strong desire to fix himself in these islands, where he might live in perfect tranquillity, at a distance from the evils of tyranny and war.

Singularly enough, also, the much-enduring Ulysses, the man of many counsels, was fabled to have set forth in his old age in quest of new discoveries, and to have reached the ocean beyond the Pillars of Hercules, where all further trace of him was lost. One of the finest episodes in the *Divina Commedia* of Dante describes this last voyage of the old-world adventurer in a high strain of poetry. It may only have been one of the floating legends of the heroic age in Greece,—one of the mendacious audacities for which she was reproached, with

curious inconsistency, by a nation which cheerfully received as authentic the apocryphal narratives of Livy; but there is something in the spirit of the wild romantic enterprise which will ever make it highly fascinating to a poetic imagination.

In modern times, when one would have thought the last vestiges of mystery would have vanished, like ghosts at cock-crow, from these beaten highways of commercial enterprise, it is remarkable with what obstinacy the inhabitants of the Canaries have clung to a belief in the existence of an imaginary island in their own neighbourhood. It is called the Island of St. Brandan, a Scottish abbot of the sixth century, who is said to have discovered a mysterious island in the ocean, while searching for some enchanted region, of which the rumour had been borne to him,—an earthly paradise, but inhabited by infidels. It was visible at intervals, and so general was the conviction of its reality, that it was laid down in maps. It is described as a "mountainous island, about ninety leagues in length, lying far to the westward. It was only seen in perfectly clear and serene weather. To some it seemed one hundred leagues distant, to others forty, to others only fifteen or eighteen. On attempting to reach it, however, it somehow or other eluded the search, and was nowhere to be found." So recently as 1721, an expedition sailed from Teneriffe in quest of it. But, though fortified by the presence of two friars, who were sent to propitiate the capricious saint, St. Brandan made no sign, and his island remained invisible. In 1759, a Franciscan monk gave a minute description of it in a private letter, as it appeared to himself from the village of Alaxero, at six in the morning of the 3d of May.

There was a similar tradition current in the time of Columbus respecting the Island of the Seven Cities. It has been conjectured that shadowy reflections of land and trees visible in certain states of the atmosphere, like the Fata Morgana of the Sicilian seas, may have given rise to these legendary tales. (See W. Irving's Notes to *Life of Columbus*.)

(7.)—Stanza XV.

Thy noblest children, who stood forth to brave
Thy frenzy, from thy bosom thou hast driven.

The allusion in this and the succeeding stanzas is to the persecutions of the native Protestants, which, within the last ten years, have given this island an ill-omened celebrity. Only a passing reference to these unhappy events is here admissible. Let it suffice to say, that the outrages to which a bigoted priesthood gave its sanction, were worthy of the worst times of the Church of Rome, and that the courage and constancy with which they were endured, read like passages from the annals of the early Church under the reign of a Decius or a Diocletian.

THE END.

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